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**STYLE IN THE MUSIC OF ARTHUR
SULLIVAN: AN INVESTIGATION**

BY

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**Submitted 30th September 2017 for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Abstract

ABSTRACT

Style in the Music of Arthur Sullivan: An Investigation

Martyn Strachan

This thesis examines Sullivan's output of music in all genres and assesses the place of musical style within them. Of interest is the case of the comic operas where the composer uses parody and allusion to create a persuasive counterpart to the libretto. The thesis attempts to place Sullivan in the context of his time, the conditions under which he worked and to give due weight to the fact that economic necessity often required him to meet the demands of the market. The influence of his early training is examined as well as the impact of the early Romantic German school of composers such as Mendelssohn, Schubert and Schumann. In the second half of the thesis, selected features of Sullivan's style are analysed in detail as is the influence of prominent European composers such as Berlioz and Liszt. The final section is a close examination of Sullivan's most successful choral work, *The Golden Legend*.

One of the principal aims is to address the dearth of scholarship on the technical aspects of this composer's music. Where a great deal of information is available about his biography, not least from the diary he kept from 1876 until his death, the sharply defined contrasts in Sullivan's use of musical style seem to have deterred commentators from enquiring too closely into his compositional techniques and this has led to certain false assumptions and misunderstandings. A close examination of these techniques may encourage a greater recognition of Sullivan's considerable achievements and foster a more open-minded attitude to his music and that of other nineteenth-century British composers.

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Martyn P. L. Strachan

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PRELIMINARY

Introduction: Aims and rationale for the study

Sullivan appears in the history of music as an almost unique figure. His own career path was very unusual, having begun conventionally with the best musical training then available at London and Leipzig and writing the type of works that were expected of him. He then proceeded with W. S. Gilbert to initiate a new genre and in the opinion of many, only fulfilled his early promise intermittently, but with two outstanding successes of his later years in the dramatic cantata *The Golden Legend* (1886) and the opera *Ivanhoe* (1891).

It is the aim of this study to examine the reasons and circumstances that led to this outcome. In part, these are concerned with Sullivan's own personality, his background and psychology. Of equal importance is the period in which he worked; an age of violent contrasts with the creation of enormous wealth and national prestige as well as dire poverty and deprivation. Britain's status as the centre of an empire that covered a quarter of the globe is also relevant as it affected how Sullivan and his music were regarded in relation to other nations and to some extent, how Sullivan saw himself. The place of musical style is regarded as central to the understanding of his work as a composer since his output appeared also to contain contrasts as marked as those of the age itself, with sentiment and irrepressible high spirits often in close proximity, sometimes within the same work.

For his music and his many other activities to be fully understood, Sullivan must be seen not merely in the context of the history of British music, but of the time itself, one exemplified by Matthew Arnold's promotion of the idea of 'high seriousness' in poetry (Arnold, 1906: 21). This is a term unlikely to be applied to most of Sullivan's music and it is relevant because Arnold's view found its counterpart in the beginnings of what was later to be termed the English Musical Renaissance, where seriousness was highly prized. The place of religion in the society of the time is also relevant, partly because the most popular musical genre outside the theatre was the oratorio which, certainly at the beginning of Sullivan's career, meant a setting of the scriptures, but also because the religious and philosophical certainties of previous ages were threatened by new thinking which was to change the perception of the nature of Man and his place in the universe.

This investigation of Sullivan's use of musical style sets out to determine how he himself regarded the matter and the various ways in which he used it, both in the context of the comic operas and his other music. The way in which the styles relate to each other as found within the individual genres in which Sullivan worked is of interest as well as how they differ, and an attempt is made to suggest the underlying reasons for both the differences and the similarities. In this context, 'musical

style' should be understood as the employment of certain musical gestures, harmonic, rhythmic or rhetorical that a composer may invest with a certain significance, depending on the type of work he is writing. Even in stereotypical forms, certain tendencies may be observed, such as the use of certain keys in given contexts. In works which are more obviously dramatic, such as opera, the use of such gestures is more likely to be found and in comic opera, even more so than in its serious counterpart.

Although much has been written about Sullivan's partnership with Gilbert, there is surprisingly little detailed examination of his music. Such criticism as has appeared is discussed and tested against the available evidence and an attempt is made to arrive at a balanced view of how and why Sullivan wrote in the way he did. The uniqueness of Sullivan's position in music history has led to widely differing estimates of his abilities. Those attracted by the qualities of the comic operas have tended to be repelled by the serious parts of his output and this has led to their being ignored or dismissed as unworthy of criticism. Conversely, many people during Sullivan's lifetime and afterwards considered his work for the theatre a deplorable waste of his gifts, no less than a betrayal of trust in the opinion of one commentator, and that these were works that were fated to perish with the age in which they were written.

One feature which the adherents of both extremes had in common was to take Sullivan's contribution to the comic operas for granted, either because it was regarded as being beneath serious analysis or because the Gilbert and Sullivan synthesis made the words and music an almost indivisible unity. This led, in some quarters, to a reluctance to allow Sullivan his share of the credit in their joint success. Thus, many features of his music have often gone unremarked, such as his use of parody and allusion which has led even sympathetic writers to miss Sullivan's humour on occasion, often due perhaps to an unfamiliarity with the source.

For one hostile critic, the music in the comic operas 'is not self-subsisting' (Walker, 1907: 292); another cites his early training as a Chapel Royal chorister as the explanation as to why 'the church organist and the Anglican anthem play curious games of hide-and-seek with an incongruous quasi-Gallic frivolity' (Howes, 1966: 51). Many who have written both disparagingly and admiringly of Sullivan's music have done so from a standpoint of not knowing enough about what they were criticising. The approach is too often superficial and lacking in rigour. Late in Sullivan's life and in the aftermath of his death, several books about his music were produced by writers such as B. W. Findon (*Sir Arthur Sullivan: His Life and Music*, 1904) and Charles Willeby (*Masters of English Music*, 1893) which were almost bereft of any genuine insight and made extravagant claims for the composer unsupported by any real evidence; this further weakened his reputation and assisted the prevalence of the negative view of Sullivan which had persisted for so long.

This study is an attempt to look closely at Sullivan's techniques and methods of working within the various genres in which he wrote and to understand how the various parts of his output relate to each other and how they differ. Inevitably the contribution of his early training, both in the Chapel Royal and the conservatories of London and Leipzig, must be assessed and a judgement formed on what their lasting effects on Sullivan's music may have been. Similarly, the first ten years or so of his career as a young composer working in London had a significant impact on his later work and this too is examined, as are selected aspects of his style that seem to be most significant in that they are observable in almost all the genres in which he worked. The final section is a close study of the most important work of Sullivan's maturity outside the theatre.

Research Question

At first glance, it may not appear obvious why the question of style in Sullivan's music should merit detailed investigation. The initial answer lies in the noticeable contrast in style between Sullivan's comic operas and the rest of his output. The comic operas, being his best-known works, have tended to be regarded as 'typical' of Sullivan, but a closer examination reveals a much more complex relationship between them and his other music. Gervase Hughes, in one of the few monographs solely concerned with his music, states that,

Attention has several times been focused... on the diverse influences to which Sullivan was subject: indeed it has been impossible to exculpate him altogether from the charge of eclecticism. No doubt some readers have wondered where this was leading: they may have heard a piece referred to as being 'typical Sullivan', which now begins to look like a contradiction in terms (1960: 154).

In fact, a detailed and thorough examination of Sullivan's references within the operas reveals that these occur at different levels; some superficial and others more concealed. Their significance has tended to be underestimated, with writers such as Hughes regarding them as incidental, unconscious or as an indication of weakness on the part of the composer. Any acquaintance with Sullivan's music outside the comic operas shows that such references are not to be found there. This includes his music for the theatre written with collaborators other than Gilbert. This should dispose of the idea that Sullivan's use of allusion in the operas was anything other than deliberate.

This factor to some extent accounts for the mixed reception that Sullivan's non-theatrical music has had, even from his admirers, based on the perception that the style is so distinct from that used in specifically what is known as the Savoy operas, that many have found it alienating. However, comparisons between the orchestral and choral works also show stylistic differences, although Sullivan's compositional techniques, as distinct from the musical style he chose to employ, tended to be uniformly the same, regardless of the genre. His songs and ballads have an identity of their

own and they are not easily related even to the operas, where some common ground might have been expected. The reasons for these differences are worthy of investigation.

The various writings on Sullivan raise more questions than they answer, and a complex picture emerges where various factors appear to have combined to create the conditions under which Sullivan produced his music in all its diversity. These include his singular position in Britain as a young man in the 1860s, when he was regarded as embodying the hope of English music in a national context. In the second half of the nineteenth century the English musical establishment developed something of an obsession in their expectation of new English great master. Percy Young attributes this to being 'a by-product of power in other fields' (1971: 264) and in the first 10 years or so of his career Sullivan may be said to have fulfilled this role admirably.

However, at this same period, as a professional composer without private financial means or the advantages of patronage, Sullivan was obliged to write music for the various markets such as those for songs and ballads, church music and the then current enthusiasm for choral singing. At this time there was a distinct hierarchy of musical genres, with the oratorio being the most highly regarded, as witness the attitude of one of Sullivan's teachers, Sir John Goss (1800–1880), who, when discussing Sullivan's first attempt at oratorio, *The Prodigal Son* (1869), clearly regarded the symphony as inferior.¹ When Richard D'Oyly Carte effectively created the demand for comic opera, Sullivan naturally wrote for that market as well. At this point the conflict between artistic and financial interests became fully apparent and this remained unresolved for the rest of Sullivan's career. The influence of snobbery, both social and musical, was to play its part. Sullivan, because of his perceived failure to engage with the efforts to raise the art of music to a higher plane and his huge financial success through writing for a genre most considered degraded, lost caste with his contemporaries and by the end of his life, he was almost completely isolated professionally.

The issue of musical style can, therefore, be regarded as the common factor in both his successes and in what came to be regarded rather unjustly as his failures. As the product of what was a decidedly conservative training, Sullivan's early success was due in no small part to his ability to assimilate and reproduce the features of the current early romantic style with sufficient individuality and in the first ten years of his career he made a serious attempt to secure success within the limitations of the stereotypical forms of symphony, concerto, concert overture and oratorio. Concurrently he used the same techniques to write songs and ballads and short pieces of choral music, both secular and religious, that accorded with what was then fashionable within these genres and which would bring him commercial success.

¹ See the quotation from Goss on p.227.

When writing for the Savoy Theatre this ability was put to a different, but more profitable use, with Sullivan creating a many-layered musical structure which encompassed some of the structural conventions of grand opera with the stylistic features of much of the contemporary repertoire, the whole forming a complete musical counterpart to Gilbert's libretto, itself rich in allusion and topicality. To make a distinction between an 'allusion' and a 'reference' in the comic operas is problematic, since Sullivan is adept at suggesting a style without recourse to quotation. One might be tempted to suggest that an 'allusion' could be to an individual piece, such as the debt to Gounod evident in Sullivan's setting of the words 'The sun whose rays are all ablaze' from *The Mikado* (See p.122–3). However, a reference may be the use of a particular style, such as Verdi's at certain dramatic moments, but without necessarily indicating a particular piece (See p.76–7).

In the serious works such as *The Golden Legend*, which belong to the latter part of Sullivan's career, the use of a mixture of styles was regarded as appearing to less advantage and this has probably been partially responsible for the work's ultimate eclipse, the fashion in aesthetics in the twentieth century requiring that works of art should have a recognisable stylistic integrity. In the context of this work, Sullivan's stylistic plurality has been much misunderstood, and the study concludes with a detailed examination of it, including Sullivan's technique of using musical style as a form of structural device.

The foregoing is a preliminary to identifying the research questions that have informed the study. These include the following:

- To what extent has criticism of Sullivan's comic operas been impeded by the failure of many writers to recognise when Sullivan was deliberately making use of different styles for particular purposes?
- What is the relationship between Sullivan's music for the theatre and the rest of his output?
- How did Sullivan relate to the nineteenth-century market for cultural goods?
- How did Sullivan's use of musical style relate to the audience's expectation of various musical genres?
- To what extent is Sullivan's success in comic opera attributable to the fact that it is a genre that, at the time, was not a stereotype?

All the above questions are closely related and attempts to answer one have assisted in answering others to the point where the various issues tend to merge.

The likely audience for this research would be musicologists with an interest in nineteenth-century British music. The technical knowledge that must be assumed, particularly in stylistic analysis, would be such as most general readers on music would be unlikely to possess. This is also true of the two existing books concerned solely with Sullivan's music by Thomas F. Dunhill (1928) and

Hughes (1960) and they make no concessions in their use of technical language. The same can be said of Young's book (1971), which attempts to blend biography with musical analysis. The recent biographies of Parry, Stanford and Stainer by Jeremy Dibble also include very full discussions of their subjects' music in technical terms. The present research may be viewed as an attempt to fill a space in writings about Sullivan. The aim has been to clarify and enlarge the picture that has emerged so far of both the man and his achievements. In addition, this study of his use of musical style is intended as a means of broadening the knowledge of Sullivan's compositional processes and techniques.

The Context for the Research

During the last thirty years there has been a noticeable growth in interest in all aspects of the Victorian age. New biographies of political figures have appeared such as Gladstone and Rosebery, writers as diverse as Wilde, Lytton Strachey and Shaw and artists such as John Singer Sargent and Augustus John. In the area of music there has been much work undertaken in the series *Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain* under the Ashgate imprint (now Routledge). The range is wide including subjects such as the concept of music in Victorian fiction, studies of the conductors Sir Michael Costa and Sir Charles Hallé, the publisher Vincent Novello, as well as the publishing house of Novello, and the place of music in institutions, academia and the work of the composers such as Hamish MacCunn and Michael Balfe.

The trajectory of Sullivan's career, which plotted a course from the most prominent composer of his time in the 1860s to an anachronism by the end of 1890s, followed by a slump in esteem in the period immediately after his death, has meant that the process of rehabilitation has taken longer than usual. This has been partly due to the continued popularity of one section of his output, namely the comic operas, the success of which has seemed to militate against any sort of balanced assessment of his other music. It is as though some commentators are acutely conscious of an aesthetic conflict when regarding Sullivan's music, which means that they have difficulty accepting that the same composer could write in such widely differing musical styles, depending on the genre. Superficially there seems to be nothing in common between a work such as Sullivan's most ambitious oratorio, *The Light of the World* and *The Mikado*, his most successful comic opera, but these are works that are at opposite extremes of Sullivan's wide creative range. If *The Golden Legend* is substituted for the oratorio and *The Yeomen of the Guard* provided as an example from the operas, examination reveals much more that would be recognised as stylistically related, sometimes closely.

This study is situated within these recent developments in nineteenth-century music criticism, which have also seen reappraisals of Stanford by both Paul Rodmell and Dibble; Parry and Stainer by Dibble; the provincial music festival by Drummond and the impact of Mendelssohn on Victorian

England by Colin Eatock. The aesthetic difficulty described above emerged at a very early stage, even before Sullivan began his joint work with Gilbert. Sullivan's former teacher, Goss, feared that his pupil's very facility worked against his being able to produce serious music that would have some chance of permanence, and he expressed this in his reservations about Sullivan's first essay in oratorio, which has already been mentioned (Jacobs, 1984: 60). Sullivan's friend Sir John Stainer (1840–1901) also had misgivings about the same work, but on slightly different grounds; he detected a lack of originality and substance in some of the musical ideas, but also saw that there was a danger of Sullivan being seduced by mere commercialism, and expressed the wish that he would 'write for the future' (Dibble, 2007: 114).

As Sullivan's career progressed, this critical uneasiness grew and continued for many years after his death, with critics condemning Sullivan for his waywardness or lack of serious artistic purpose until well into the twentieth century, despite the fact that, of the music written during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Sullivan's comic operas are almost certainly the most widely known, in some instances almost achieving a status comparable to folk music. This close examination of musical style in Sullivan's music is an attempt to find the common ground in the various areas of his output and to explain how the strong contrasts which may be observed, disguise an underlying unity. This unity comes from a combination of Sullivan's early training, the cultural and artistic conditions of mid-Victorian England and the results of his artistic partnership with W.S. Gilbert (1836–1911), a literary talent that was the perfect complement to his own.

Summary of Methodology and the Rationale for the Choices Made

Looking at Sullivan's career, in addition to his work as a composer, he was involved in almost every area of national musical life. From his early experiences in music education, the editing of opera scores and a very full professional career as a conductor, it is remarkable that he managed to write as much as he did. Few composers have produced music that has ranged so widely in mood and purpose from the most solemn to the most light-hearted. The question arises as to how to encompass this in any study of the composer's musical style that could do justice to the two extremes.

The answer appears to lie in Sullivan's biography. The events that had most influence on his later development included his experience of playing in his father's military band, his time as a Chapel Royal chorister and his musical training in London and Leipzig. For their significance to be apparent, they must be placed in the context of the time; this becomes crucial when examining his first ten years or so as a professional composer in London, entirely dependent on his ability to have works accepted by publishers, while at the same time, attempting to establish his reputation and position as England's foremost composer. During the twenty-five years in which Gilbert and Sullivan were working together, there were other developments in the world of music that were to herald a major

change in aesthetic attitudes. The establishment of the Royal College of Music and the increase in influence of the composers and teachers most closely associated with it were to have a profound effect on music as a national institution, but for Sullivan it was an indication that he belonged to any earlier age, one that was in the process of being eclipsed.

The effect of the new seriousness in which music came to be regarded had a more dramatic effect on Sullivan's reputation after his death. While the comic operas never dropped out of sight, almost everything else he had written quickly disappeared. The reasons for this are explored as well as the attitude of the majority of critics, but excepting Bernard Shaw (ed. Crompton, 1978), who stood out against the crowd.² He refused to enthuse about the fruits of what was termed the English Musical Renaissance, but also saw that Sullivan's work for the theatre could, without absurdity, be regarded as being of lasting value.

Having considered the effects of the early part of Sullivan's career, it follows that the contributions of literature and the theatre as an institution would need to be considered fully. Even before working with Gilbert, vocal and choral music bulked large in Sullivan's early output and it is his work as a composer of music for the theatre that he is best known, and these two aspects are considered in detail.

Having placed Sullivan in the context of his time and working environment, it is appropriate to analyse his music in stylistic terms. The various headings chosen are designed to highlight as fully as possible the perceived contrasts in his output, but also the significance of the orchestra as a key stylistic component, which also forms a continuous thread through all of Sullivan's music for orchestral forces, which is by far the majority. The other choices have been designed to highlight the most distinctive areas of his music where the dramatic requirements made the employment of a highly characterised musical style inevitable, such as the *mise en scène* of *The Mikado* or the supernatural subject matter of works such as *The Sorcerer* or *Ruddigore*.

Sullivan did not, of course, work in a vacuum and his diary reveals that he was fully aware of the work of his continental contemporaries. During his formative years two figures dominated European music during the middle years of the century and these were Berlioz and Liszt. Sullivan knew Liszt personally and Berlioz and Liszt knew each other well. While Sullivan's early enthusiasms were for Mendelssohn, Schumann and Schubert, in later years his music reflects the admiration he had for both his older contemporaries and particularly when he came to write *The Golden Legend*.

The final section of the thesis deals with this work in detail as a case study. The justification for this lies not merely in the fact that, for many, it represented Sullivan's good deed in what was otherwise

² One textual detail should be noted that concerns quotations from those who have written about Sullivan's music. Throughout the thesis the titles of works are given in italics. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, where the author did not choose to italicise the titles of works in his writings, this has been changed.

thought to be a naughty world, but it can also be regarded as signalling the end of an era in British music history, in a way similar to the conclusion of Handel's career as a composer of *opera seria* that also effectively marked the end of the genre. The work also contains music that shows Sullivan experimenting with new freedoms in tonality, in using style as a means of musical construction and foreshadows his using some of the same techniques in a modified form in the later operas. It shows that he could write music of genuine dramatic power outside the confines of the theatre, but also demonstrates the one or two minor instances where he does not quite rise to the occasion. In the Conclusion an attempt is made to summarise the position of musical style in Sullivan's music having regard to the effects of his background and training, his necessity to earn his living primarily as a composer and his strong inclinations to the dramatic and the theatrical.

Statement of the Claim for the Significance of the Research

The principal claim for the significance of the present research is that it is one of the very few studies of the music that attempts to deal with Sullivan's entire output, albeit in the context of only one aspect. Inevitably, much of the most detailed discussion of style has centred on Sullivan's use of it within the comic operas, at least those written with Gilbert. Although regard for Sullivan's music outside that for the theatre has greatly increased, it is in the operas that Sullivan's rare skill in this area is most evident. A rather more general approach has been taken when discussing the orchestral and choral works, since within these forms, the composer naturally tends to be more stylistically consistent, as befits the genres, although some exceptions and correspondences between the theatrical and non-theatrical works are noted.

Thomas F. Dunhill's book (1928) is confined to the comic operas with a brief section on *Ivanhoe*. Hughes' study does comment on all aspects of Sullivan's music, but is too influenced by the prevailing critical fashion that saw no merit in the serious music and expressed distinct reservations about certain features of the operas. A new book by Benedict Taylor in Routledge's Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain Series, *Sullivan: A Musical Reappraisal* (2018)³ has just been published. This covers all the genres in which Sullivan wrote, but does not attempt a comprehensive survey of Sullivan's music within them.

Bradley (2013) and Anderson (2016) both fully discuss the choral music, in the case of Bradley largely omitting the secular items. The two studies, with their different emphases, provide a great deal of valuable information on the works they upon which they comment, placing them in the context not only of Sullivan's life and work, but also his spiritual outlook about which Bradley writes with great perceptiveness. The strength of Anderson's work is his detailed technical discussion of all the music in his chosen category, in some cases dealing with certain works for the first time.

³ This is the date given in the book by Routledge, the publisher.

This study of musical style in Sullivan's music is offered as a means of seeing his work as a single entity, the product of one remarkable creative mind producing a wide variety of music in many different genres, yet with common elements that, at first sight, seems to suggest the very opposite of unity. Like Frederic's birthday in *The Pirates of Penzance*, this is a *veridical paradox*; a result that appears to be absurd, but is true nonetheless (Quine, 3: 1966). The main purpose of this undertaking has been to investigate and then demonstrate the evidence to support this statement.

Literature Review

Arthur Sullivan's case is unusual in that he appears in many books as an historical figure, as part of one of the most successful working partnerships in the musical theatre. Paradoxically, however, very few books have been written which deal with Sullivan's music in any detail. The writings that do mention his music are often found as part of longer works, such as histories or studies of British music or which trace the development of a genre such as operetta.

By far the greatest number of books that feature Sullivan are those which deal with the history of his association with W. S. Gilbert and the formation of what was to become the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. In most cases Sullivan's music is not discussed or analysed at all. However, it should be said that they are aimed at the general reader with an interest in music and as such could not be expected to contain very detailed discussion of either the words or the music of the comic operas.

However, they may often include a telling comment or anecdote that casts a different light on an aspect of the music. Examples of these general guides to their work would include *Gilbert & Sullivan* by Alan James (1995), *Gilbert & Sullivan* by Michael Ffinch (1993), *Gilbert and Sullivan: Their Lives and Times* by Leslie Baily (1974), *Gilbert and Sullivan: Lost Chords and Discords* by Caryl Brahms (1975) and *Gilbert and Sullivan and Their Victorian World* by Christopher Hibbert (1976). These are comparatively recent examples. In the 25 years which followed Sullivan's death, several books appeared by authors such as Cellier and Bridgeman, B. W. Findon, Percy Fitzgerald, A. H. Godwin and H. Saxe Wyndham, which covered the same ground, but with less detachment and frankness.

The above represent a small sample of the whole and considered as a genre, their chief weakness is that the accounts tell the story in an almost identical way. A chronological narrative deals briefly with the collaborators' lives before they met; each successive comic opera is discussed with sidelights on the work that Gilbert and Sullivan accomplished singly. Often the emphasis is more literary than musical as in Hesketh Pearson's account of the partnership (1935) and this is developed further in *W S Gilbert: His Life and Strife* by the same author (1957).

Elsewhere writers concentrate more on the tradition that arose from performance of the comic operas; Audrey Williamson's *Gilbert and Sullivan Opera: A New Assessment* (1953) is one, as is *The Gilbert and Sullivan Book* by Leslie Baily (1967). This is a detailed account of the emergence of the

D'Oyly Carte Opera Company as well as a history of the partnership. There have been two doctoral theses which have dealt with Sullivan's career; one is David Russell Hulme's: *Sullivan's Theatre Music from a Study of the Autograph Scores* (1985) and the other is David S. Mackie's *Arthur Sullivan and the Royal Society of Musicians of Great Britain* (2005), later published in book form by the Royal Society. Both deal with specialised areas and while David Russell Hulme makes a detailed documentary and textual study of the autograph scores, they are not analysed in musical terms.

Ian Bradley has written perceptively about the operas and his *The Complete Annotated Gilbert & Sullivan* (1996) is an invaluable guide. From time to time he does draw attention to some of Sullivan's allusions, but his main emphasis is literary. Similarly, the same author's *Oh Joy! Oh Rapture! The Enduring Phenomenon of Gilbert and Sullivan* (2005) assesses the current level of popularity of the operas, the standard of performances and other related matters. His most recent contribution to the literature is *Lost Chords and Christian Soldiers* (2013). This is a detailed study of Sullivan's oratorios and church music. Of particular value is the author's discussion of the composer's approach to the texts and his skill and insight in assembling them to produce the libretto for his first work in the genre, *The Prodigal Son* and his dramatic handling of the Christian and Pagan conflict in *The Martyr of Antioch*.

Beyond the comic operas, Sullivan's music has had an enormously varied reception history, ranging from the enthusiasm and frankly, overstated praise for his early works to the almost universal condemnation heaped upon what is usually termed his serious music during the fifty years or so after his death. The enduring popularity of the comic operas quickly made them almost impervious to critical assault, although a tendency to praise Gilbert at Sullivan's expense did emerge.

In 1899 there appeared the first biography of Sullivan by the journalist Arthur Lawrence. Its chief value today is that it brings the reader close to Sullivan, as it was written with his co-operation. It makes use of Sullivan's diary and letters and his reminiscences, which appear to have been elicited by a series of interviews. Also included is a critique of the music by B. W. Findon, who was to write his own biography of Sullivan in 1904. Inevitably, Findon's views lack objectivity and his enthusiasm for his subject's music precludes any real critical discussion. Further, as a journalist, (he wrote mostly about the theatre), they carried no real weight with professional music critics.

With Sullivan's death in 1900 it was inevitable that his reputation would be somewhat diminished. It had risen so high during his lifetime that it was also to some degree necessary. Even so, the reaction that now set in seems in retrospect disproportionate. In March 1901 J. A. Fuller-Maitland published an extensive obituary in *The Cornhill Magazine*. He bestows moderate praise on the comic operas but has nothing save withering contempt for the rest of Sullivan's work.

The charges of vulgarity and an almost criminal lack of serious artistic purpose were to be made against Sullivan time and again. Ernest Walker in his influential study, *A History of Music in England* (first edition, 1907), comprehensively rejects any claims Sullivan may have had to greatness. Unlike other unsympathetic critics of the time, Walker was reluctant even to allow Sullivan his share of the credit in the success of the comic operas saying that, 'it is nearly always the librettist who is the inspiring talent' (Walker: 1907: 292) which, as others have remarked, is to make strange use of the word *inspire*.

When Walker considers Sullivan's output outside the operas, he finds little to excite his approval and his praise for works such as the incidental music to *The Tempest* and the Overture *di Ballo*, is decidedly lukewarm. Like Fuller-Maitland, he devotes much space to condemning what he regards as Sullivan's failings. More than any other assessment of Sullivan's work, Walker's view was to dominate critical attitudes to the composer for a significant part of the twentieth century.

In 1927 there appeared the biography of Sullivan by his nephew, Herbert Sullivan and Sir Newman Flower. This was the official biography and was less concerned with its subject as a musician or composer, but as a national figure. It was important because it was the first complete account of Sullivan's career to appear since his death and it drew upon Sullivan diaries and private papers. It was to be the only complete biography until Young's appeared in 1971. Its chief faults are a lack of detachment and, in some instances, proportion and the fact that any discussion of the music is confined to press reports.

Of much greater value was the appearance of the first book devoted solely to Sullivan's music. This was *Sullivan's Comic Operas: A Critical Appreciation* by Thomas F. Dunhill (1928). Dunhill's avowed purpose was to meet head-on the assaults on Sullivan's reputation described above. His principal target, of course, is Walker and he answers Walker's critique almost point by point. Unfortunately, he quotes some of Walker's phrases out of context while attempting to suggest that he had 'pronounced sentence of death without listening to any evidence which is in favour of the accused' (1928: 22).

Yet Dunhill himself was influenced, perhaps unconsciously, by the negative estimates of Sullivan's worth as a composer. While taking exception to Walker's disparagement of the serious works, he is still able to state that 'we shall not determine the true importance of Sullivan until we make up our minds to disregard his serious work altogether (1928: 235). From the present standpoint, this still appears to do Sullivan a disservice, although, in fairness, it must be said that this is based on Dunhill's view that his serious works represented Sullivan's talent, which had dated and the comic operas, his genius, which had not. In any event, as Hughes points out, Dunhill clearly meant that, for Sullivan's sake, he would *prefer* to disregard his serious music (Hughes, 1960: 4).

When he comes to discuss the operas in detail, Dunhill achieves an excellent balance between enthusiasm and criticism. His analysis is close without becoming ponderous and his touch throughout remains light. Like other writers on Sullivan, he sometimes fails to recognise when the composer is employing parody.

In 1960 Macmillan and Company published *The Music of Arthur Sullivan* by Gervase Hughes. Hughes had been a pupil of Walker and the early part of the book consists of a review of the literature about Sullivan as it then stood, including a balanced view of the difference of opinion between Walker and Dunhill. Part of the justification for writing the book had been that Dunhill had confined himself to the comic operas, although he did provide a section on *Ivanhoe*. Hughes's intention had been to embrace the whole of Sullivan's output, but like Dunhill, he was unable to free himself of the negative received opinion about the music excluding the operas.

The most positive aspect of Hughes's book, however, is that, in his discussion of the technical aspects of Sullivan's art, he is by far the most scrupulous and detailed until more recent times, dividing the whole into separate chapters on harmony, word-setting, counterpoint, melody and so forth. In the main his conclusions are sound and fair and well supported by quotation. He does give the question of the different musical styles to be found within the music some consideration, but this is not seen as part of Sullivan's technical equipment, being regarded as either incidental or as a symptom of artistic infirmity. However, his identification of them is persuasive, despite not including quotations from the composers he cites.

As only the second book solely concerned with Sullivan's music, (Hughes provides only an outline of his life and career), it can only be regarded as partially successful, since it merely reinforces the critical attitudes of the previous half-century regarding Sullivan's serious music while giving cautious praise to that part of his output which had never been out of public attention save during the two world wars.

In 1971 Percy Young produced the first full biography of Sullivan in over forty years. In it the author's attention is divided evenly between the biographical details and a consideration of the music. Space did not permit his discussion of technical matters to be as detailed as that of Hughes, but its great virtue is that, for the first time, assessments are made of parts of Sullivan's music that had previously been ignored or dismissed, such as the early oratorios, examples from the songs, some instrumental music and music for the theatre outside the operas. Further, Young finds much to admire, sometimes with reservations, but for the most part, his views are positive.

While the book is a little compressed to do full justice to both the biography and as an assessment of Sullivan's output, Young deserves credit for taking such pains to examine so much music which others had been content to pass by as unworthy of comment. Thus, we are given helpful and

unbiased estimations of some of the songs, the so-called 'sacred music drama' *The Martyr of Antioch* and the music that Sullivan wrote for theatrical works other than *The Tempest*. Further, the style of writing is one that would encourage the reader to investigate further on his own initiative.

Following Young's example in 1971, Arthur Jacobs produced his biography of Sullivan in 1984. It makes no attempt to discuss Sullivan's music in analytical terms, but as the most detailed account of his life to appear thus far, it is unlikely to be surpassed. Jacobs's focus is on the man and the musician, rather than the composer, although he does from time to time comment on aspects of the music. His extensive use of Sullivan's diaries brings the reader closer to the composer than ever before, including Lawrence's first attempt, written with Sullivan's willing assistance. The sensual side of Sullivan's character is presented as frankly as any other, but while the diary has proved invaluable in providing an almost daily record of his life, it is unfortunate that he was not given to self-communing about his music. However, for the first time, there is a complete list of works, including Sullivan's work as an editor, his prose writings and the songs he contributed to plays, as distinct from incidental music.

The lack of detailed critical discussion is regrettable and there are also some statements made by the author about matters such as Sullivan's attitude to the work of other composers that are not properly supported by the evidence produced. However, generally, it is a considerable achievement, avoiding both idolatry and condemnation alike and giving generous praise for the many things that Sullivan did well. In reviewing the fortunes of Sullivan's reputation, however, Jacobs clearly thought that, although Fuller-Maitland's and Walker's attitude to him was too extreme, he regarded it as prophetic in the sense that, outside the comic operas, for him, the rest of Sullivan's music was beyond rescue.

He did not anticipate the renewal of interest in Sullivan's music over the last 25 years that has seen recordings of both *The Golden Legend* and *Ivanhoe*, all the music written for plays, the ballet music, *The Prodigal Son* and several of the operas written with collaborators other than Gilbert. This has been very largely through the initiative of The Sir Arthur Sullivan Society (of which Jacobs was an honorary vice-president). Critical reaction to these recordings has largely been enthusiastic and the choral works, for example, are now attracting performances, at least from amateur forces, to an extent unimaginable in the recent past.

Also, in 1984 there was published *The Complete Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Guide* by Alan Jefferson. The main virtue of the book is that it collects all the libretti, including that for *Thespis*, and presents them in a clear large-format setting. Each opera is introduced with a synopsis and Jefferson strikes an admirable balance in explaining the features of both the words and the music. More than any other author, he enumerates Sullivan's allusions, although briefly and without quotation, but he

clearly regards the score as a complete humorous counterpart to Gilbert's text, not merely musical froth which only has the virtue of not distracting the listener.

The late David Eden in his 1986 book *Gilbert & Sullivan: the creative conflict* took a specialised view of the partnership and its works. By the time the book came to be written, a somewhat rigid convention had grown around discussion of the comic operas and the reassessment of Sullivan's serious music had barely begun. Eden was a former Chairman of The Sir Arthur Sullivan Society, but was a psychologist by profession and this enabled him to cast a new light on personalities of the partners. He makes clear Gilbert's debt to writers such as Thackeray and persuasively demonstrates the autobiographical aspects of the opera libretti. He also sketches in the theatrical background of burlesque.

Inevitably the balance of the book favours Gilbert, who represents a more fruitful psychological study than Sullivan, but Eden has some shrewd remarks to make about the composer, pointing out that his attitude to his craft was not consistent with what a composer in the nineteenth century was expected to be, which was to have a monstrous ego like Beethoven, or later, Wagner. Eden devotes only one full chapter to Sullivan, but he shows that what has otherwise been regarded as Sullivan's character weaknesses, such as his apparent passivity and dependence, can be regarded as strengths insofar as, without them, he could not have achieved what he did. Thus, when he was tempted to bow to convention and make the grand gesture of self-assertion that such a work as *Ivanhoe* would require, the results seem less successful because they are recognised, perhaps only unconsciously, as being a consequence of the composer's departure from his genuine self.

The work of the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society, apart from making available high-quality recordings of his neglected works by professional forces, has been to increase markedly the esteem in which Sullivan's music is held. The publication of two volumes of essays under the title *Sullivan Perspektiven*, the first in 2012 and the second in 2014 provides some indication of the success of this process. A third volume was published in 2017. The editorial team is Anglo-German; Albert Gier, Meinhard Saremba and Benedict Taylor and contributions are in both English and German, covering subjects in the first volume such as 'Sullivan's Orchestral Sound World' by Roger Norrington, an essay on Sullivan's hymn tunes by Ian Bradley and 'Sullivan and Imperialism' by David Eden. The second includes James Brooks Kuykendall writing about 'Structure and Texture of Savoy Recitative' a comparison between Sullivan's *The Light of the World* and Elgar's oratorios and substantial sections on his incidental music for the theatre and his songs. Inevitably the quality of the contributions is somewhat variable, unavoidable in collections of this type, but in general most of the chapters throw light on aspects of Sullivan's music or discuss areas of his output that have received little or no critical scrutiny, and this is extremely helpful in allowing unprejudiced assessments to be made of works that have tended to be underestimated.

The two most significant recent contributions to the literature about Sullivan's music are Paul Geoffrey Anderson's thesis submitted to Durham University in 2016 and Taylor's *Arthur Sullivan: A Musical Reappraisal* (2018). Anderson's title is *A Source of Innocent Merriment in an Object all Sublime: A Critical Appraisal of the Choral Works of Sir Arthur Sullivan*. In many ways, it complements Bradley's study admirably since the emphasis is much more musicological. Bradley is excellent on the theological background to the oratorios, Sullivan's own religious position and how this is reflected in his approach to writing them. However, Anderson embraces Sullivan's entire large-scale choral output, the secular cantatas such as *On Shore and Sea*, the so-called *Masque at Kenilworth* as well as the oratorios and the two later examples that are closer to religious music-drama. Anderson provides ample detail of the background to each of the works and his discussion balances enthusiasm for the subject with objective criticism. In all, it must be considered a valuable addition to the writings on Sullivan's music.

Taylor's approach is to select works within the various genres represented in Sullivan's output and to discuss these in detail, but it was not his intention to write a comprehensive study of Sullivan's music. The author includes works, such as Sullivan's song cycle *The Window*, the incidental music to *The Tempest* and the Symphony in E and the thorough examination he provides is a welcome corrective to the superficiality of much of the writing on Sullivan's music.

The last twenty years have seen a marked increase in the interest in the music of the Victorian period with studies of specialised areas such as opera, various institutions and figures prominent at the time such as Costa and Hallé. Since the publication of Jacobs' biography over thirty years ago, and the work of the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society during this time, the profile of the composer has risen considerably, with scholars turning their attention to the various aspects of his output. Sullivan's achievements can more clearly be regarded as a complete entity rather than a solitary success in the specialised area of comic opera.

Overview of the Thesis Structure

Chapter 1: Contexts – The Musical and Cultural Environment of Mid-Nineteenth-Century England

1.1 'There is so much I want to do for music...' – *The Formation of a Personal Style or the Cultivation of Habits?*

1.2 *The Mid-Victorian Musical Style*

1.3 *Aspirations and Commerce – A Stylistic Conflict of Interests*

1.4 *Faith, Doubt and Philosophy - The Musical Implications*

1.5 *Singing, Virtue and Philanthropy – Choral Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain*

1.6 *A Renaissance of Atmosphere? – The Beginnings of the Musical Renaissance and the Effect on Musical Style*

1.7 *Towards a Sullivan Typology – The Significance of Recurring Examples of Style*

Chapter 2 – Influences – The Making of an English Composer

2.1 *The Conservatory Student*

2.2 *The Young Composer in London*

2.3 *Sullivan as Editor*

2.4 *The Influence of the Theatre*

2.5 *The Impact of Literature*

Chapter 3 – Analysis – Sullivan’s Use of Style in Practice

3.1 *The Orchestra as a Component in Sullivan’s Style*

3.2 *The Evocation of the Exotic*

3.3 *The Chromatic Idiom*

3.4 *Berlioz and Liszt*

3.5 *Sullivan’s Development as a Composer of Oratorio*

Chapter 4 – *The Golden Legend* – A Case Study of a Mid-Victorian Archetype

4.1 *Sullivan’s Depiction of the Supernatural*

4.2 *The Role of the Orchestra*

4.3 *Sullivan’s Use of the Chromatic Idiom*

4.4 *The Evidence of Berlioz’s Influence*

4.5 *The Relationship of the Music to the Operatic Genre*

A Comparison Between The Golden Legend and Selected Examples of Sullivan’s Shorter

4.6 *Choral Music*

4.7 *Sullivan’s Depiction of the Sea*

4.8 *Indications of Earlier Stylistic Influences*

4.9 *The Golden Legend Compared to Ivanhoe and the Development of Sullivan’s Later Style*

4.10 *Reception*

CHRONOLOGY

ARTHUR SULLIVAN'S LIFE AND WORK

- 1842 13 May: Arthur Sullivan born in London
- 1850 First composition (Anthem - *By the Waters of Babylon*)
- 1854 April: Sullivan enters the Chapel Royal as a chorister
- 1856 Sullivan becomes 'first boy' in the choir of the Chapel Royal
June: Sullivan awarded the first Mendelssohn Scholarship
September: begins studies at the Royal Academy of Music, London
- 1858 September: begins his period of study at the Leipzig Conservatorium until April 1861
- 1861 Returns to London to work as an organist, conductor and composer
- 1862 5 April: first performance of Sullivan's incidental music to *The Tempest* at the Crystal Palace
Forms friendships with George Grove, Charles Dickens and Jenny Lind. In the winter visits Paris and meets Rossini
- 1863 Works on the Symphony in E, songs, church and chamber music
- 1864 14 May: First performance of the ballet for Covent Garden, *L'Ile Enchantée*
8 September: First performance at the Birmingham Festival of *Kenilworth*
- 1866 Performances of the Symphony in E, Overture in C (*In Memoriam*) and the Cello Concerto
- 1867 11 May: One Act opera *Cox and Box* at the Adelphi Theatre, London
3 June: First performance of the Overture *Marmion* at St James's Hall
October: visits Vienna with George Grove and discovers a quantity of Schubert autographs
18 December: First production at St George's Hall of *The Contrabandista*
- 1869 8 September: First performance at the Worcester Festival of the oratorio *The Prodigal Son*
- 1870 August: first performance of the Overture *di Ballo*. Begins relationship with Mrs Ronalds
- 1871 Incidental music to Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. 1 May: first performance of the cantata *On Shore and Sea* at the Royal Albert Hall; first collaboration with W.S. Gilbert, *Thespis* at Gaiety Theatre, London. Song Cycle - *The Window* to poems by Tennyson
- 1872 1 May: performance of the *Festival Te Deum* at the Crystal Palace, London
- 1873 27 August: first performance at the Birmingham Festival of the oratorio *The Light of the World*
- 1874 Sullivan composes the incidental music to Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*
- 1875 D'Oyly Carte commissions *Trial by Jury* from Sullivan and W. S. Gilbert and it is first performed at the Royalty Theatre on 25 March; Sullivan begins his long collaboration with Gilbert
- 1876 Sullivan appointed principal of the National Training School for Music and receives an

- honorary doctorate from Cambridge University.
- 1877 Writes 'The Lost Chord', provides incidental music for Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*. 17 November first performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's first two-act comic opera, *The Sorcerer* at the Opéra Comique, London
- 1878 25 May: *HMS Pinafore* first produced at Opéra Comique, London
- 1879 Dispute with the Comedy Opera Company. 4 August: the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company formed
- Sullivan awarded honorary degree by Oxford University
- October: Sullivan, Gilbert and D'Oyly Carte visit the United States of America
- 31 December: *The Pirates of Penzance* first produced in New York
- 1880 Sullivan appointed Director of the Leeds Music Festival
- 15 October: Sacred Music Drama *The Martyr of Antioch* performed in Leeds
- 1881 23 April: *Patience* opens at Opéra Comique, London
- 10 October: *Patience* transfers to the new Savoy Theatre in the Strand
- 1882 25 November: first performance of *Iolanthe* at the Savoy Theatre
- 1883 Sullivan enters into a 5-year contract with D'Oyly Carte
- May: Sullivan receives knighthood
- 1884 5 January: first performance of *Princess Ida* at the Savoy Theatre
- First major quarrel with Gilbert
- 1885 14 March: first performance of *The Mikado* at the Savoy Theatre
- Sullivan appointed conductor of the London Philharmonic Society
- 1886 16 October: Sullivan's Dramatic Cantata *The Golden Legend* is first performed at the Leeds Festival
- 1887 22 January: *Ruddigore* is first performed at the Savoy Theatre.
- Ode for the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Imperial Institute* performed
- 1888 Sullivan works with Irving and writes incidental music to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*
- 3 October: *The Yeomen of the Guard* is first performed at the Savoy Theatre
- 19 October: Sullivan delivers his lecture *About Music* at Birmingham
- 1889 Second major quarrel with Gilbert.
- 7 December: *The Gondoliers* first performed at the Savoy Theatre
- 1890 The Carpet Quarrel. D'Oyly Carte builds The Royal English Opera House
- 1891 31 January: The Royal English Opera House opens with the first performance of Sullivan's opera *Ivanhoe*
- 1892 D'Oyly Carte closes the Royal English Opera House
- 24 September: *Haddon Hall* first performed at the Savoy Theatre
- 1893 7 October: *Utopia Limited* first performed at the Savoy Theatre

- 1894 12 December: *The Chieftain* first performed at the Savoy Theatre
- 1895 Sullivan write incidental music for Comyns Carr's play *King Arthur*
November: *Ivanhoe* performed in Berlin
- 1896 7 March: first performance of *The Grand Duke* at the Savoy Theatre
- 1897 25 May: the ballet *Victoria and Merrie England* performed at the Alhambra Theatre,
Leicester Square
- 1898 28 May: *The Beauty Stone* first performed at the Savoy Theatre
- 1899 29 November: *The Rose of Persia* first performed at the Savoy Theatre
Arthur Lawrence works with Sullivan to produce the first biography of the composer
- 1900 22 November: Sullivan dies in London at the age of 58

CHAPTER ONE

Contexts - The Musical and Cultural Environment of Mid-Nineteenth-Century England

The sequence of events in Sullivan's career as a composer and the impact that they had on his reputation, both before and after his death, could have probably only occurred in Britain at this particular juncture in history. Sullivan seems to have realised that much work needed to be done for music in this country, as the quotation from his letter below makes clear, and his youthful idealism and confidence persuaded him that it was he who should carry it out. At the time, many would have agreed with him and confidently expected to watch his progress with an indulgent eye, as he carved out a niche for himself, writing the type of music and following the approved career-path for which his excellent training in London and Leipzig had so obviously fitted him.

This first chapter examines the musical, cultural and economic environment in which Sullivan worked. In addition, the spiritual and philosophical concerns are described and where Sullivan stood in relation to these. As the age was one of rapid development, the changes in attitude to music became apparent in the last quarter of the century and this was to affect Sullivan's professional standing to a marked degree. The chapter ends with an attempt to establish a stylistic typology for Sullivan's music.

* * *

1.1 '*There is so much I want to do for music...*' - The Formation of a Personal style or the Cultivation of Habits?

The quotation contained in the title to this section is from a letter from Sullivan to his mother and it needs to be put into some sort of context. In 1875, having written the music for his second collaboration with Gilbert, *Trial by Jury*, Sullivan went on holiday to Italy, staying with Sir Coutts and Lady Lindsay at Lake Como. He wrote as follows: 'I am dead tired today. Next week I shall be knocked up, I fear...There are so many things I want to do for music if God will give me two days for every one in which to do them' (quoted by Baily, 1967: 133).

In his teeming professional life, Sullivan succeeded in doing much for music as a composer, conductor and educationalist, an aspect often overlooked by commentators, partly because of his later aversion to teaching, but the chief reason for the bestowal of his knighthood in 1883; a populariser of music through his own compositions and his conducting of those by others and a sponsor of the nascent English talent represented by figures such as Elgar and Ethel Smyth. However, it may be thought that Sullivan to some extent sacrificed his own musical identity in the pursuit of these varied causes. The sequence of works he composed in the 1860s, beginning with the first London performance of his music for *The Tempest* in April 1862, were the Symphony in E (March 1866), the Overture in C, *In Memoriam* (October 1866), the Cello Concerto (November 1866), and the Overture *Marmion* (June 1867). There then follows an interval of some three years

before the Overture *di Ballo* is written for the Birmingham Festival of August 1870. By any standard, this group of compositions represents a notable body of work, given that they were composed during so much other activity and it is here, if anywhere, that the makings of a personal style are likely to be found.

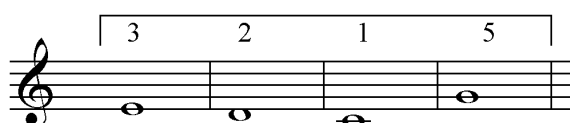
By the end of the 1860s Sullivan's reputation had been established and the spur to assert himself as England's foremost composer was less keenly felt, added to which, he had discovered that artistic success did not necessarily result in more material rewards. His own resolve to write in any class of composition, as expressed to his first biographer Lawrence, 'so long as I could get the things published' (Lawrence, 1899: 50), meant that he had to write for the market. Since the demand for symphonic works tended to be sluggish, he turned to the ballad, the part song and the oratorio and in due course, the comic opera. This was a circumstance that similarly afflicted Elgar at a time when he was the acknowledged leader of his profession both in England and Europe. His publishers were Novello whose chairman, writing to the company secretary Henry Clayton in 1914, declared that Elgar's terms were 'high amounting to extortion but...other houses would jump at the stuff at the price...I don't want any more Elgar symphonies or concertos, but am ready to take as many part-songs as he can produce, even at extortionate rates' (quoted by Kennedy, 1982: 259).

If Sullivan's last purely orchestral work, the Overture *di Ballo*, was his most successful, and for many years it was the only one outside the comic operas that featured regularly in concert programmes, it may also be considered the most accomplished of the group. It is discussed in some detail in 2.2. By this time, Sullivan's technique with his material, favouring a type of thematic transformation to more conventional developmental procedures, was entirely assured. His command too of orchestral sonority had never really been lacking and its place as an intrinsic stylistic component is discussed at length in 3.1. Examination of his first important orchestral work, the incidental music to *The Tempest*, reveals that these features were present from the outset, including the thematic procedures. Sullivan's practice of what might be termed 'thematic economy' is evident from the opening theme of the Introduction that forms the nucleus of the work and this is quoted below.

In his essay 'Re-enchanted Isle: Sullivan's incidental music to *The Tempest*' (SP11, 2014: 309–32) Taylor provides a most useful and detailed analysis of Sullivan's treatment of his material. This appears to be the first full explanation of not only how skilfully it was used, but also just how astonishing this achievement must have been for a boy of eighteen at this time in the history of British music. Not the least remarkable feature of the work is that Sullivan, even at this early stage, is not tempted to be prodigal with his musical ideas. Taylor's analysis shows how closely integrated thematically the various movements are, but also notes the moment when Sullivan does introduce new and unrelated material to signify the release of Ariel from the servitude of Prospero in the setting of 'Where the bee sucks, there lurk I'.

As Sullivan had done in his earliest significant work for the theatre, he was also to do often in the comic operas and this is an aspect of his technique, as applied to them, which has not received a great deal of attention. In 3.2 there is an explanation as to how Sullivan uses a melodic cell as the basis for much of the vocal writing in *The Mikado* and this device can also be observed in both *Iolanthe* (1882) and *Ruddigore* (1887). In an article for the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society Magazine (No.84), Harris discusses in some detail this aspect of Sullivan's writing. Below are given some examples from these two operas where unusually, Sullivan appears to make use of the same melodic cell within both.

Ex.1.1 *Iolanthe* and *Ruddigore* - melodic cell used in both

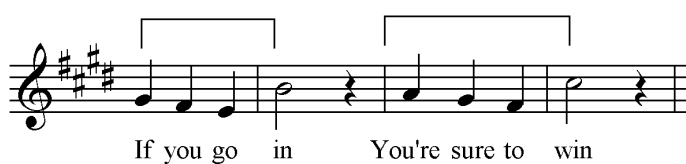


Ex.1.2 *Iolanthe* - examples

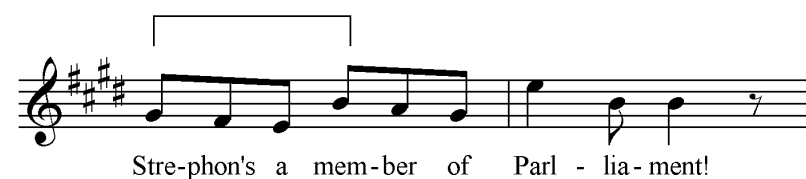
(a)



(b)



(c)



Ex 1.3 *Ruddigore* - examples

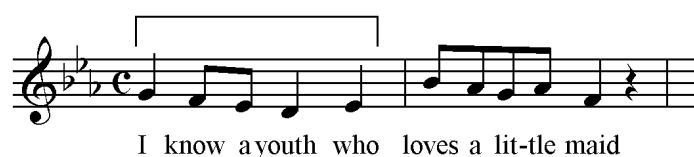
(a)



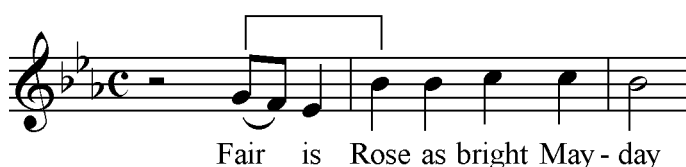
(b)



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(d)



Although Sullivan makes extensive use of this melodic cell in both works, the listener remains unconscious of its use and it cannot be said that the music of *Ruddigore* is in any way reminiscent of that of *Iolanthe*. Even where the resemblance is a close one as in the following example; these two fragments are both taken from passages involving the male chorus. In the first instance, quoted above from *Iolanthe*, 'Strephon's a member of Parliament' 1.2. (c), Sullivan employs a 6/8-time signature. In the example below from *Ruddigore* the time signature is 12/8. The difference in verbal accentuation is sufficient to disguise to the listener the very close resemblance between the two passages when they are compared on paper.

Ex.1.4 *Ruddigore*, ensemble in Act 1, theme for male chorus from bar 24

Allegro



Harris asks whether 'the repeated use of these four notes represent a sign of melodic poverty on Sullivan's part?' His answer is that it does not because, 'First, by the widely varied forms in which the motto is employed...and second, by a close examination of the extremely diverse ways in which Sullivan extends and develops his melodies from the initial impetus of the motto cell' (SM, No.84: 15).

He goes on to consider whether the existence of the motto is 'the result of conscious artistic planning, or of unconscious creative impulses?' Knowing Sullivan's tendency, not to say preference, for working at speed and under pressure, Harris concludes that it is more likely that he, 'wishing to imbue the greater part of his score with a consistent atmosphere' unconsciously found creative impetus from a recurring thematic matrix (SM, No.84: 15). Harris's conclusion is the more likely given what we know of Sullivan's personality, as revealed in his letters and diaries. The type of forward planning necessary for such an approach would be unlikely in the circumstances of composing for the Savoy Theatre, where so much had to be sacrificed to ensure that the opera was ready in time.

After the Birmingham Festival of 1870, where the Overture *di Ballo* received its first performance, Sullivan's next work for orchestra alone was the ballet he was commissioned to write for the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee in 1897, *Victoria and Merrie England*. The various scores which he wrote for the ballet, beginning in 1864 with *L'Île Enchantée*, stand somewhat apart from the rest of his output for two reasons; the first is that here, more than in any other genre in which he wrote, Sullivan reused previous material from earlier works, but always from his ballet scores. These movements were not transferred *en bloc*, but considerably reworked and usually rescored. Secondly, he developed a separate ballet style distinct from any other to be found in his output. This meant that, even if a work consisted of movements written at widely spaced intervals, there should be no stylistic incongruity. Thus, apart from the ballets so-called, it is a style which makes its appearance only under certain circumstances; the dance movements within the suites of incidental music for plays, where it might reasonably be expected and similar instances in the comic operas such as the Gavotte in second act of *The Gondoliers*, the Graceful Dance in the second act of *Utopia Limited* and the general Wild Dance in the second act of *The Grand Duke*.

More surprising is its appearance at other junctures within the operas, notably often in the introductions to the second act, such as in *The Mikado* and the introduction to the first chorus of the second act of *Iolanthe*, 'Strephon's a member of Parliament' (quoted above), but it should be noted that, even where a dance is not specified, such passages almost invariably cover stage movement by members of the chorus. The characteristics of the style are a strong rhythmic drive and an intricate and often ornamented melodic line, such as in this example from the Graceful Dance, part of the incidental music to *Henry VIII* (1877). The other examples are passages which

accompany firstly the entrance of the bridesmaids in *Trial by Jury* and secondly the entrance of the ladies' chorus in *The Mikado*. In both cases this is their first appearance. The likeness of the melodic figuration in these two quotations is striking and although notated somewhat differently, the excerpt from the Graceful Dance from *Henry VIII* also shows its affinity with the other two.

Ex.1.5 (a) *Henry VIII*, 'Graceful Dance' from bar 7

p e leggiero

(b) *Trial by Jury*, entrance of the Bridesmaids from bar 18

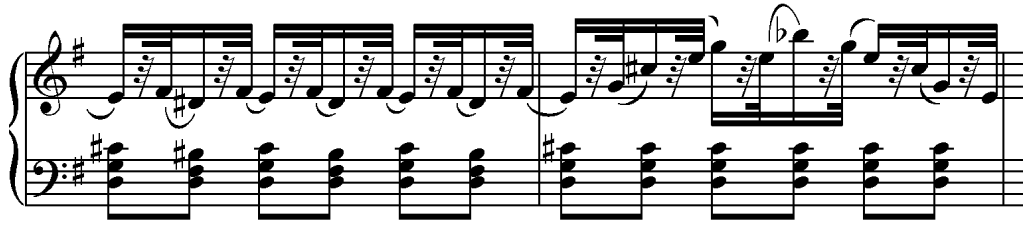
bar 18

p

cres.

(c) *The Mikado*, Act 1, entrance of the ladies' chorus from bar 1

p



Sullivan's contributions to the symphonic repertory, mostly written in his first 10 years as a professional composer, show that he had assembled the elements of what could have become a distinctive musical personality in the symphonic field. His admiration for Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn combined to produce a distinctive musical identity that sounded like none of his contemporaries. In his review of the first London performance of the incidental music to *The Tempest*, the critic of the *Cornhill Magazine* detected 'something that indicated an original composer' (quoted in *SPII*, 2014: 312).

Henry Chorley, reviewing in *The Athenaeum* the two performances given on the 5th and 12th April 1861, claimed that there were 'few references to any model' (quoted in Jacobs, 1984: 27), although the music's likeness, at least in formal design, to that provided by Mendelssohn for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* could hardly have escaped him. Schumann's influence too can be found in Sullivan's use of chromatic harmony, notably the Preludes to Acts 1 and 5. These recall the Overture to *Manfred* and the D minor Symphony (No.4) with its thematic transformations, a technique adapted for his own use by Sullivan giving a degree of motivic integrity throughout the work. (*SPII*, 2014: 313). Taylor goes on to say that, 'Sullivan is not merely copying surface stylistic traits in order to emulate the models honoured in Leipzig and (with regard to Mendelssohn at least) in England, but is taking up deeper structural principles that underpinned their music and developing them into something distinctive' (*SPII*, 2014: 314).

Young, writing in *A History of British Music*, reaches the same conclusion and identifies 'the qualities of Mendelssohn and Schumann worked into an individual style' (Young, 1967: 506). However, at the same time and doubtless due to his writing for the theatrical environment, Sullivan began to develop certain stylistic habits within his music written for the theatre that were to persist for the rest of his life. In short, certain settings, ideas, sentiments, or even Gilbert's stage directions, such as the entrance of the ladies' chorus discussed above, were apt to provoke a similar musical response. This is not to suggest that such a trait should be either approved or condemned, but the observable tendency is worth noting. However, rather like Sullivan's use of 4 or 5 note musical cells discussed above, it has the effect of providing an additional element of stylistic integrity which is even more remarkable given the composer's predilection for musical allusion within the operas. The final section of this chapter attempts to identify some of these to determine whether it is possible to construct a Sullivan typology.

1.2 The Mid-Victorian Musical Style

Writing towards the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century and about such a figure as Arthur Sullivan, one is struck by the thought that, while 175 years may have elapsed since Sullivan's birth, the fact is that so much of what the Victorians created is still present to our senses; many of the buildings, the railways, the advances in medicine, engineering and construction still form part of our daily experience.

The fate of Victorian art has been more uncertain. The literature has never really fallen from favour, but the drama and music were destined, for the most part, to die with the age that had created them. The works for the theatre more than any other fell rapidly and completely out of favour, the exceptions being the plays of Oscar Wilde and one or two by Arthur Pinero such as *The Magistrate* (1885) and *Trelawney of the Wells* (1898). Of the enormous quantity of serious drama produced, nothing now remains, except an occasional revival of one of the stage adaptations of Mrs Henry Wood's novel *East Lynne* (1861), as a novelty. As to the reasons why this should be so, an indication is provided by Simon Callow in his excellent book on Charles Dickens. In describing the theatre of the nineteenth century in Britain, he points out that,

All the great writers wrote for the theatre – Byron, Shelley, Walter Scott – and on the whole what they wrote for it was fundamentally untheatrical. It was an age of huge personalities, of stupendous scenic effects, of patriotic sentiment and radical satire, supposedly tightly censored but slipping rapidly out of control. (Callow, 2012: 35)

This was essentially the environment in which the young Gilbert began to work when struggling to make a living as a barrister, since little had changed from Dickens' youth.

The fate of much of the music was more mixed. After the passing of the Victorian age, there was a ferocious critical reaction to its music, clearly articulated in Ernest Walker's *A History of Music in England* (1907) and the second edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Fuller-Maitland (1904). Much of the orchestral music and the many attempts at writing opera in English were destined for early oblivion, but the survival of the Music Hall tradition meant that some of the music from its heyday survived with it, as did several the songs and ballads intended for the domestic market.

While much of Sullivan's serious music has suffered from many years of neglect and contempt, the bulk of his output for the theatre remained current, sustained by the performing tradition of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company (1875–1982) and the enthusiasm of conductors such as Sir Malcolm Sargent, who championed Sullivan's music both in the theatre and the concert hall. His music is a valuable and almost unique part of the Victorian legacy and one of the objects of this study is to try to identify the qualities in it that enabled it to survive when so much did not.

The musical world into which Sullivan was born in 1842 was one dominated by European influences, although, with one or two exceptions, they tended not to be contemporary. The music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven had become widely known by this time. Much of this was due to Novello's work in producing cheap printed music in octavo editions. Fellowes states that costs were reduced to about a twentieth of what they had been previously and this factor, almost more than any other, was what stimulated the huge interest in choral singing and the formation of choral societies throughout the country (Fellowes, 1969: 220). Initially at least the repertoire was weighted towards the eighteenth century, with Handel being the most popular composer and *Messiah* his most popular work, a situation which continued even when the genre had become a fixture in British musical life.

One of the principal outlets for composition at this period was the church and it was into this niche of British musical life that the young Sullivan was to enter as a chorister of the Chapel Royal. While cheaper production costs made printed music more available, the influence of the Oxford Movement stimulated the demand for services and anthems in the increasing number of churches whose musical establishment would include a robed choir. The prevailing cast of creative endeavour was essentially conservative, represented among composers by figures such as Sir George Elvey (1816–93) and Sir Frederick Ouseley (1825–89). Goss and S. S. Wesley (1810–76) were more adventurous, although there was also a deep-seated conservatism in Wesley which seemed to conflict with his desire to experiment. Caldwell remarks that the orchestral versions of Wesley's large-scale anthems, such as *The Wilderness* (1832) and *Ascribe Unto the Lord* (1851) have the effect of highlighting the composer's creative shortcomings, specifically structural, even though the orchestration *per se* is beyond reproach (Caldwell, Vol.2, 1999: 240).

One figure that dominated the musical scene at this time, certainly in the capital, was Sir Michael Costa (1808–84) to whom Sullivan was something of a protégé. Costa not only recommended him to the Birmingham Festival of which he was director and for which he wrote *Kenilworth* (1864), but also secured for him the position of organist at Covent Garden. Church music apart, he had a role in almost every other sphere of public music making. Beginning in 1830 at His Majesty's Theatre in London, as a conductor he was a genuine force for change. The discipline he imposed and his insistence on accuracy and unanimity of attack was unusual at this period. After a disagreement with the theatre management, he moved to Covent Garden in 1847. He also conducted the Philharmonic Society, the Sacred Harmonic Society, the Birmingham and Leeds Festivals and the Handel Festivals. Even by the standards of the time, Costa's industry was prodigious.

In amongst all his activities, he still found time to compose, although none of his music has retained any currency. Yet, Caldwell says of his oratorio *Eli* (1855) that '[it] is a solitary masterpiece much overlaid with Italian operatic idioms'. He also adds that Costa's second oratorio *Naaman* (written

for the Birmingham Festival of 1864) is less successful (Vol.2, 1999: 219). Given Costa's Italian origins and close involvement with opera in London, the stylistic influence is hardly surprising. Due to Costa, Sullivan was afforded an invaluable opportunity to hear much of the operatic repertory at first hand (Goulden, 2012: 253–90).

In the opera house the most far-reaching influence was the development and spread of Romanticism. A work such as Weber's *Der Freischütz* (1821) was astoundingly successful. In 1824 it was being performed in four different London theatres and it was inevitable that British composers would wish to respond both to it and the Romantic movement, one which had within it overtones that were both political and moral. Henry Bishop's *Aladdin* (1826) was intended as the native response to Weber's *Oberon* (1826), but it was merely an embarrassing failure. Described by Corder⁴ as 'Bishop's solitary specimen of a real opera without spoken dialogue', he quotes the composer himself as saying that, 'Chiefly owing to the imperfect state in which it was brought out it was not successful'. However, Corder states that his father and the brothers George and Walter Macfarren contradicted this, describing the staging as 'magnificent', but the music as 'insipid'. He goes on to say that a study of the vocal score confirms this, 'Indeed it is so phenomenally dull as to be quite unlike Bishop and to engender a suspicion that he never wrote it at all. His subsequent work, though not his best, is quite different from this' (MQ, 1918: 89).

A preference in Britain for opera with dialogue made imitation of German and Italian models difficult and the indigenous ballad opera, which had been a reaction to *opera seria* and its conventions, had no place for the ensembles to be found in the operas of Mozart. Apart from the question of scale, the musical numbers in ballad operas were usually very short and few British composers at this time could attempt an extended concerted movement that could combine both musical and dramatic incident. Weber's *Oberon* was first performed on 12 April 1826 at Covent Garden and was a setting of an English libretto that showed what a master of the form could achieve within the current operatic conventions.

In fact, it was Weber's *Der Freischütz* that offered the main inspiration to composers of Romantic opera: it showed how, even with extensive dialogue, it was possible to achieve characterization by musical means and to incorporate lengthy set pieces, both solos and ensembles, that allowed for emotional development during their course. It also strengthened... 'the legitimacy of the supernatural as a source of motivation in 'serious' opera'... (Caldwell, Vol.2, 1999: 181-2).

Weber had made a deep impression on music in London. As an example, Caldwell states that Edward Loder's score for his opera *The Night Dancers* (1846) 'shows real dramatic imagination [and] embodies the spirit of early German Romantic opera, the source of inspiration for Wagner himself'

⁴ Frederick Corder (1852–1932), composer and teacher of composition at the Royal Academy of Music.

(Vol.2, 1999: 196–99). Other opera composers included Julius Benedict (1804–85), who was from Germany, the Irish Michael Balfe (1808–70) and William Vincent Wallace (1812–65), and George Macfarren (1813–87), already mentioned.

While the influence of Romanticism might be beginning to become discernible in operatic productions, in the areas of oratorio and cantata a more conservative idiom still held sway. Handel was still regarded as the most legitimate stylistic model, although in the music of William Crotch (1775–1847), John Clarke-Whitfield (1770–1836), Henry Bishop (1786–1855) mentioned above and John Francis Barnett (1837–1916) there are indications that they were aware of the example of Haydn, whose *The Creation* and *The Seasons* were only slightly less popular than Handel's works, but also Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. By the middle years of the century, however, Mendelssohn's two great choral works, *Elijah* (Birmingham 1846) and *St Paul* (Düsseldorf 1836) had made an indelible impression on music in Britain and much mid-Victorian music, not just in the area of choral music, attests to his influence. These two oratorios became the most popular examples of the genre after Handel's *Messiah* and this would remain the position until well into the twentieth century.

In the case of orchestral music, the concert life of the capital had been greatly stimulated by the formation of the Philharmonic Society in 1813. It had commissioned Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, but also encouraged English composers to produce works for orchestra. Macfarren, Cipriani Potter (1792–1871) and William Sterndale Bennett (1816–75) all wrote symphonies, but the Society also included chamber music and songs in their programmes as well as smaller scale choral works. The English symphonic works of this time are not inconsiderable achievements in their own terms, although the style is often mixed with recollections of earlier classical models co-existing with more contemporary examples such as Mendelssohn. This is more marked in the music of Macfarren and Sterndale Bennett who both wrote many works in the classical forms of symphony, concertos for various instruments and concert-overtures, which, because of their more compact form, seem, from a modern perspective, to be the more successful. A good example by Macfarren is his Overture *Chevy Chase* (1836) and from Bennett his Overture *Marie du Bois* (1843–4), which also opened his once popular cantata *The May Queen* (Birmingham Festival 1858).

There was no shortage of musical activity in Britain at this time, although much of it was concentrated in London. The work of the Philharmonic Society was to enable the music being written in Europe to be heard by London audiences, although it was still likely to be that of those composers who were established figures, such as Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. Schubert would gradually find acceptance, but until Mendelssohn's visits to Britain and the enterprise of later conductors such as August Manns at the Crystal Palace, contemporary European music would have been little heard. All this activity, however, did not combine to make a recognisable British school

of composition and it was to be the end of the century before such a claim could legitimately be made.

Those who attended concerts preferred mixed programmes, where orchestral and chamber music and vocal or choral items would be presented in the course of one evening. The first public concerts which contained only chamber music are said to have begun in 1835, but mixed programmes continued to be presented for some considerable time after that date and this represented a significant difference from other European countries (Vol.2, 1999: 221). Similarly, in the musical theatre, the custom was for pieces with dialogue and the composition of fully sung through-composed works had never gained a foothold in Britain. This also separated Britain from the other European theatrical traditions where works for the stage with dialogue were very much the exception.

This was a situation that was to continue throughout the whole of the nineteenth century, with Sullivan finding his greatest success in those works that adhered to an established national model that had its origin in a response to the *opera seria* of Handel and Bononcini. If his orchestral music written in the 1860s made less of an impression, this was perhaps because London was still not quite ready to embrace the music of Schubert or Schumann, which meant a great deal to Sullivan, perhaps more than even Mendelssohn. Potter, the Principal of the Royal Academy, initially thought that Sullivan's time in Leipzig had been his undoing. As Young says, 'The frontiers of respectability in music, so far as he was concerned, stopped short of the three composers about whom Sullivan most talked: Schumann, Wagner and Schubert' (1971: 32). Potter admitted to Sullivan that he had not heard any of Schumann's works and agreed to play through some piano duet arrangements of the symphonies with him, not only giving up his time, but also showing a willingness to alter his views.

The desire to compete with the best that Europe had to offer was strong, together with a certain perplexity as to why Britain had not yet succeeded in doing so. Therefore, when Sullivan's abilities became apparent at an early age, much was expected of him. Part of the object of this study is to try to explain why some of these expectations were destined to be frustrated.

1.3 Aspirations and Commerce – A Stylistic Conflict of Interests

The nineteenth century in Britain was, above all, period of great industry in all fields of activity and music was no exception. In the popular genres, such as the drawing-room ballad, publishers subsidised ballad concerts and the singers would earn a royalty for publicising their material. Music hall songs gained currency by being played on street pianos (often called barrel organs). These were hired out at a daily rent to travelling musicians. The same situation could be observed in serious music; the entrepreneurs were always in the background. The music publishers Novello

were the promoters of the Promenade Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall and Chappell's (in due course the publishers for Gilbert and Sullivan's joint works) helped to finance and build St James's Hall, Piccadilly, deriving enormous profits from the series of popular concerts held there. This was despite an inauspicious beginning when the building costs rose to over three times what had been estimated.

While the Chappell family played a significant part in the musical life of the capital, a large part of their motivation was commercial, with St James's Hall using Chappell pianos, music published by Chappell's and the company also promoted those performing there. They were also shrewd speculators, foreseeing the popularity of both Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl* and Gounod's *Faust* and as stated above, having the wisdom to ensure that the vocal scores of the Savoy operas were for sale on the morning after the first night (Pearsall, 1973: 219).

The most emblematic manifestation of both the popular and the commercially successful musical enterprise in this period was the Music Hall. Pearsall points out that this was to the nineteenth century what the cinema became to the twentieth:

In many ways their fortunes have been parallel—small beginnings, a phenomenal growth rate, a rationalisation and the elimination of the little man, followed by a decline as rival forms of entertainment take over. The transitional states of both media (bioscope to cinema, song and supper room to music hall) were confusing, but it took the music hall celebrities longer to realise their potential than early cinema stars. (Pearsall, 1973: 225)

He also makes the point that the injection of large amounts capital into Music Hall meant that the only productions that were likely to be supported were those which could be expected to have long runs, with an emphasis on spectacle and which would be extremely well-dressed. The prevailing philosophy was 'give the customers what they want' and this perhaps accounts for the fact that so little popular music of the period has survived and tends to be known only to enthusiasts. The obverse of this situation was that Gilbert and Sullivan's productions directly benefited from patronage and by the standards of the time, represented, in all their aspects, the highest production values of which the period was capable.

The propagators of the various systems of simplified music-reading, such as Curwen, already mentioned, and John Hullah (1812–84) 'were in a position to sponsor the composers of their choice' (Pearsall, 1973: 221). Those able to exercise influence, such as Sir Julius Benedict at the Drury Lane Theatre and Costa (at His Majesty's Theatre and later Covent Garden) could and did promote their own works. Although the costs of mounting operatic productions were high, it remained a consistently profitable area because the patrons tended to be wealthy, since only they could afford the high ticket prices. This was combined with a policy of paying all, except the principals, low

wages, so that, in the 1870s, the Covent Garden chorus, which numbered 74, with 42 men and 32 women, only cost the management £140.00 per week (Pearsall, 1973: 222).

This, then, was the reality of trying to make a living in commercial music at this time. Sullivan's economic position made it impossible for him to adhere to art solely for art's sake, to adapt Walter Pater's phrase. His determination, as expressed to his first biographer, Lawrence (Lawrence, 1899: 50), to make his living primarily as a composer had unforeseen consequences, both for his later career and his posthumous reputation. He was obliged to have regard to the market for both practical and artistic reasons. The dominance of the choral forms of composition, mainly oratorio, but also the more compact cantata, which might too be secular, made success in any other area of music less likely in Britain, as Sullivan had discovered in his first 10 years in London after leaving Leipzig, when most of his symphonic works were written.

Public and critical esteem would not sustain the type of life to which Sullivan aspired, and he remained acutely conscious throughout his career of the dichotomy presented by Life on the one hand and Art on the other. He was not immune to the temptations of social advancement, the comforts that wealth could provide and the social prestige that his success ensured. For a boy born in Lambeth in the 'hungry' 1840s, it would have been remarkable if this had not been so. Nevertheless, Eden acquits Sullivan of lowborn social ambition: 'In visiting the aristocracy in their houses Sullivan was not climbing the social ladder in any crude sense—he belonged by virtue of ability to the top drawer—but simply living the most civilised life his society had to offer...his association with the aristocracy was a mark of his own civilised qualities' (Eden, 1986: 161).

While this looks suspiciously like special pleading on Eden's part, it is a notable fact that there appears to be no record of anyone snubbing Sullivan because of his humble social origins (this subject is treated more fully in 3.1) or dismissing him as merely a *parvenu*, which suggests that Eden's analysis may well be correct, at least up to a point. This also appears to be the case as far as comment from the press was concerned. Later commentators, however, such as Walker and Fuller-Maitland were to accuse him of vulgarity in his music; of the solos in the oratorios, Fuller-Maitland said that 'the musical tastes of the multitude were consulted' (quoted in Young, 1971: 263) and expressed doubts that Sullivan could 'claim a place in the hierarchy of music among men who would face death rather than smirch their singing-robcs for the sake of fleeting popularity' (quoted in Young, 1971: 264). This was far more damaging than an accusation of mere social upward mobility on Sullivan's part would have been. It was a view, together with Walker's appraisal in his *A History of Music in England* (1907 and 1924: 295), which exerted an enormous adverse influence on his reputation and it is one that can still be met with on occasion even today. From the perspective of over a century later, this appears to be social snobbery masquerading as criticism.

Elgar's consciousness of his own isolation from the social and artistic mainstreams on economic, social and religious grounds was far greater than Sullivan's and perhaps led him to detect slights where none were intended. What is undeniable is that these factors were a source of critical comment in a way that Sullivan had never known, probably because, unlike Elgar, he was not tainted by any association with trade, and, at the Royal Academy and Leipzig, he had received the best musical education then available. In a fashionable magazine, *Vanity Fair*, Francis Toye sneered at Elgar's social and economic advancement, while as late as 1931, when he had all but stopped composing, E. J. Dent, the holder of the chair of music at Cambridge, could write, 'He was a violin-player by profession [and]...moreover, a Catholic and a self-taught man...For English ears Elgar's music is too emotional and not quite free from vulgarity' (quoted in Stradling and Hughes, 1993: 60).

Charges of populism and a lack of taste were made against both composers in different ways. Elgar had, of course, challenged the primacy of the South Kensington group of composers in his lectures as Peyton Professor of Music at Birmingham and this would not be lightly forgotten. He saw the future of music as being embodied in the work of Wagner and Strauss and had an awareness of the part he could play as an adherent of that school and as an example to younger English composers. However, he also had the same sceptical attitude as Shaw to the so-called Renaissance. He regarded the pervasive influence of the London conservatories as inimical to the progress of English music by stifling and discouraging other possibilities. Sullivan, while holding distinct views on the future of music, was by nature more diplomatic and less prone to confrontation and, while far from blind to the ambitions of his younger contemporaries, for the most part, managed a peaceful co-existence, save the episode towards the end of his life when Stanford's supporters succeeded in having Sullivan removed from the conductorship of the Leeds Festival.

It cannot be denied that there are parts of Sullivan's output that were very obviously written to satisfy a publisher's demands and, in a form, and style which would be likely to sell. Most obviously these would include a quantity of the songs and ballads and some of the shorter choral works. Jacobs gives an insight into the realities of writing for the ballad market:

From the publishing firm of Metzler he [Sullivan] received a mere five guineas for Shakespeare Songs (1863–64) including 'Orpheus with his lute'—sold outright. By contrast 'Will he come?', published in 1865 by Boosey and 'composed expressly' for the popular contralto Madame Sainton-Dolby, was paid on a royalty basis—so much per copy sold. The difference in marketing reflects the musical contrast between the two songs. 'Orpheus with his lute' would not earn much but represents Sullivan's most refined 'German' taste, recalling (with its little recurring independent theme in the piano accompaniment) Schubert's own Shakespearean setting, 'Who is Sylvia'. 'Will he come?' is of the more

obvious and sale-worthy English ballad type. The verse by Adelaide A. Procter describes a woman waiting for a horseman and dying when he fails to arrive; the music is in a supposedly solemn style, melodramatically heightened in the third verse by a galloping motive to represent what the watcher *thinks* she hears. The 'effectiveness' that made it a money-spinner is the very quality that now torpedoes it (Jacobs, 1984: 35-36). (Jacobs' use of italics for the word 'thinks'.)

In this way Sullivan's commercially successful music often seemed to contain the seeds of its own destruction when it came to be regarded in the light of the composer's later reputation. One can observe the same phenomenon when considering the oratorios. *The Golden Legend* is case in point, where the most popular single number from the work, the hymn 'O Gladsome Light', is, from today's standpoint, thought to be the weakest and somehow, in the opinion of many writers, to embody all Sullivan's infirmities as a composer of serious music. By the same token, much of the fine and indeed innovative music that Sullivan contributed to the genre; the drama of 'They went astray in the wilderness' from *The Prodigal Son* or his harrowing portrayal of 'Rachel weeping for her children' in 'In Rama was there a voice heard' from *The Light of the World*, is almost totally unknown, except to connoisseurs of his music.

In due course, the economics of popular music were to change, but not before Elgar was to experience similar problems when dealing with a publisher who stated his preference for the composer's part-songs over his symphonies and concertos and this is mentioned elsewhere. Without private means or patronage, artistic aspirations counted for little in the unforgiving world of Victorian popular music where a living had to be earned.

1.4 Faith, Doubt and Philosophy - The Musical Implications

While Sullivan's musical education was extremely thorough, his circumstances led to an early specialisation in music which meant that his general intellectual development was somewhat neglected, and this meant that, as an adult, Sullivan's range of interests were limited and his *recreations* (a busy social life, gambling and travel) tended to have little if any intellectual content. Eden relates that Sullivan met the poet William Allingham in 1863, who said of him that he had 'no ideas outside music'. Eden comments that 'This remark is wholly true. Sullivan met most of the distinguished people of his time, but nowhere is it recorded of his that the relationship extended to an exchange of ideas' (Eden, 1986: 166).

While other diarists have recorded their reflections on life, Sullivan did not; this was partly because the diary served mainly to remind him of the rapidly moving events of an extraordinarily busy life. However, this should not be taken to indicate that Sullivan as a personality was vapid and irreflective. If commentators, when writing about him, have not gone so far as to suggest this, he

has tended to be viewed as a largely secular figure that adhered to no recognised set of religious or philosophical beliefs, but this is not an accurate picture. For many, Sullivan's apparent 'worldliness', his upward social mobility and the necessity for him to earn his living by his art, obscured both the intellectual and spiritual aspects of his character which were more fully developed than might be supposed. However, he had, by his own efforts, quickly found both artistic and social success, almost from the moment returned from Germany; a quintessentially Victorian achievement.

In many ways, the Victorian age was defined by its attitude to Progress; constant advancement and improvement regardless of cost in terms of effort; Smiles' *Self-Help* 'was the self-defining bestseller of the mid-Victorian age' (Wilson, 2002: 191). Those who had succeeded in improving their lot both socially and economically were quick to resent others who were attempting advancement by the same means; a reminder of their modest beginnings perhaps only a generation or two earlier. Further, the idea that humanity might have a connection with an inferior species was a truly disturbing one. Nevertheless, by the early years of Victoria's reign the notion had acquired a certain currency. In 1844 Robert Chambers published anonymously (his views would have been condemned by the religious) his book *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*. 'Everybody' read it, and many were utterly revolted by its conclusions. (Wilson states that notable readers included Queen Victoria, Gladstone, John Stuart Mill, Schopenhauer and Florence Nightingale, although it is unlikely that Sullivan did so) (Wilson, 2002: 95). Chambers was an enthusiastic amateur, a fact noted with derision by the scientific establishment of the time; Wilson quotes Darwin as stating that, 'his geology strikes me as bad and his zoology far worse' (quoted by Wilson, 2002: 96). Having imbibed as much evolutionary scientific literature as he could, Chambers in his book projected an image of all life having a common origin that was governed by evolutionary laws that could be observed and defined.

For Chambers this was not inconsistent with the divine and his was a broadly deist view. His book prepared the ground for writings by early Victorian scientists such as Charles Lyell (1797–1875), whose book *Principles of Geology* (1830–33 and constantly updated) effectively struck the first blows against the creationist view of the earth's antiquity. To Lyell it was obvious that it was far older than a close reading of the Old Testament and the efforts of Bishop Ussher⁵ to fix the point when the creation began, would suggest. In due course Charles Darwin's exposition of the theory of natural selection was finally published in November 1859 as *On the Origin of Species*, although, at first, he did not explicitly apply evolutionary theory to Man, avoiding the issue because it was so beset with prejudice. Others, such as T.H. Huxley in *The Place of Man in Nature* (1863), overcame

⁵ Bishop James Ussher, Primate of All Ireland, (1581–1656).

these misgivings, as in due course, Darwin did himself in his *The Descent of Man* (1871) (Passmore, 1978: 38).

It is in no way to Sullivan's discredit that the type of metaphysical and anthropological speculations that were involved in the works mentioned above had little interest for him. Only a minority at the time would have had the capability to understand the issues they addressed, and few would have had the confidence to attempt a critique of them. Sullivan's type of spirituality was of a simpler, almost childlike character and tends to be expressed in the terms of affection he included in his letters to the members of his family, such as the widow and children of his brother Fred, whom he supported financially until his death. Exceptionally, in times of crisis there would be a brief reference to such matters in his diary, such as the entry to be found at September 1866 when his father died suddenly.

When writing of Sullivan, most commentators have not troubled with what his spiritual beliefs may have been. One who did was Eden, who states that 'Sullivan's Christianity was of the most summary Anglican kind...Theology meant nothing to him' (Eden, 1986: 174). However, more recent research by Bradley has allowed a more interesting and nuanced view of Sullivan's spiritual identity to become apparent.

The letters and diaries point to a simple, trusting faith, at least in the first three decades of his life. The biblical texts which he chose to set, which he himself selected for use in [his oratorio] *The Prodigal Son*, and the other texts he chose to set, with their very strong emphasis on God's overwhelming forgiveness, grace and mercy suggest a clear identification with a broad liberal theology (Bradley, 2013: 181).

Because the spirituality in Sullivan's life seems to have either been ignored or misunderstood, Bradley is careful not to overstate his religious position and Hughes was probably right when he said that 'he never filled his head with metaphysical speculations, but was content to take life as it came and happily encouraged others to do the same' (Hughes, 1960: 163). This ran counter to the intellectual temper of the age, where both the philosophical and religious controversies were taken very seriously.

While professional philosophy at this period was represented by the work of John Stuart Mill (1806–73), T.H. Huxley (1825–95) and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), Sullivan's closest approach to anything resembling abstract thought is to be found in a letter he wrote to Rev. Thomas Helmore, thanking him for his Christmas present of a new translation of Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*. In it he says,

It sounds paradoxical, but there are times to me when the music would be more beautiful and complete without notes ... How often have I felt myself hampered by having to express all I wanted to say by voice and instruments of limited means, and definite, unchangeable

quality. After all, it is only human to be longing and striving for something more than we have got (quoted in Bradley, 2013: 184).

However, this sense of striving for the ineffable, which Sullivan expresses in this passage, is a theme he touched on in his address to the Birmingham and Midland Institute of which he was President, on 19 October 1888. He quotes from Darwin's *Descent of Man* his comment that the capacity to enjoy or make music is of no practical assistance to Man in his daily life. Sullivan allows that 'physiologically', in the sense of ensuring survival, Darwin was probably right, but he then makes his case for the necessity of music in everyday life, concluding with a statement which sets music apart from the other arts on moral grounds:

Herein lies one of the divine attributes of music, in that it is absolutely free from the power of suggesting anything immoral. Its countless moods and richly varied forms suit it to every organisation, and it can convey every meaning except one – an impure one. Music can suggest no improper thought, and herein may be claimed a superiority over painting and sculpture, both of which may, and indeed do at times depict and suggest impurity. This blemish, however, does not enter into music; sounds alone (apart from articulate words, spectacle, or descriptive programme) must, from their indefinite nature, be innocent. Let us thank God that we have one elevating and ennobling influence in the world which can never lose its purity and beauty. (*SPI*, 2012: 32)

This passage somewhat recalls the moment in the first act of *The Pirates of Penzance*, where it is Poetry that is apostrophised as the 'Divine Emollient'. In the comic opera both Gilbert and Sullivan are satirising the many prayer scenes to be found in the operas of that time, Gounod's *Faust* and Wallace's *Maritana* to name only two. Here, however, Sullivan is entirely sincere, and this forms another aspect of his religious and philosophical outlook that has tended to be overlooked.

Bradley's study of Sullivan's sacred music allows a much more rounded picture of Sullivan's religious background and attitudes to emerge. One strand that seems consistently to have been ignored is the influence of his mother's Catholicism. Bradley cites Newman and Flower's statement that Sullivan's aunt became a nun and died as the mother superior of a convent in Bruges (Bradley, 2013: 39). Sullivan sometimes accompanied his mother to mass, since she seems to have remained a Catholic all her life (unlike her husband Thomas, who was a Protestant despite both his brother and sister mentioned earlier also being life-long adherents), although the music at that particular church (St Peter and St Edward, Palace Street, Westminster) may also have been an attraction (2013: 39–40). While toleration of Catholics had increased, it was still regarded with considerable disapproval in the middle of the nineteenth century, as witness the hostility to the high church movement and what were thought to be 'popish practices'.

At this period, the Church of England was bitterly divided between the Low Church and Ritualist parties. While the High Church revival of the 1840s had been primarily concerned with doctrine, the next generation of its adherents gradually began to adopt what came to be known as Ritualist Practices. For those opposed to it, it was pseudo-Popery.

The churches where these rituals were practised tended to be the poorer parishes. The clergy who laid on the incense-drowned, candle-lit ceremonials brought colour, mystery, a sense of the numinous, into the lives of people who had nothing. But, moreover, they were visibly men...who were themselves prepared to embrace poverty and fight the poor's battles for them (Wilson, 2002: 366–367).

The Public Worship Regulation Act 1874 forbade certain ritual acts such as the mixing of water and wine in the chalice and the wearing of Eucharistic vestments and some clergy were in fact imprisoned for failing to comply with the requirements of the Act. Many people, including the Queen (who declared herself more in sympathy with the Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland (Wilson, 2002: 368)) were violently opposed to the Ritualists and their practices, yet as time passed these, which had been the preserve mainly of a handful of slum parishes, had become the normal practice of Anglicans within less than a decade (Wilson, 2002: 370).

As to the music that was performed in the churches at this period, it tended to be a simplified form of the music sung in cathedrals. Caldwell states that,

The technical freedoms characteristic of some eighteenth-century parochial anthems and metrical psalm-settings were gradually eliminated as incorrect and hence unworthy, so that both the anthems and services of the more ambitious parishes and the metrical psalmody that they all shared came once more to depend on approved cathedral models and on long-standing professional practice respectively. Only towards the end of the period can one begin to speak of a distinctly parochial repertory once more, this time technically unexceptionable and the work of centrally trained composers, allied to the new hymnody... (Vol.2, 1999: 237)

The composers of the middle years of the nineteenth century included Thomas Attwood, his pupil Thomas Attwood Walmisley, Goss and S.S. Wesley. The prevailing temper of the times in music was conservative, although Goss was more adventurous in composing large-scale anthems in one movement that used a sonata-form structure. Wesley exhibited an innate conservatism in his music, despite the presence of more experimental elements which to be found in his anthems and services, where his use of a more adventurous tonal language, with some chromatic touches, can be very striking. What has tended to survive are mainly miniatures such as 'Wash me thoroughly' and 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace', but, as a whole, his career shows the symptoms of the

unsettled period through which British music was then passing, the older practices in composition sitting sometimes uneasily with the innovations.

Throughout a troubled life, Wesley had campaigned tirelessly for the reform of cathedral music and in 1849 had published his polemic, *A Few Words on Cathedral Music*... It was the widespread lax attitude within cathedrals that also prompted Sir Frederick Gore Ouseley to found St Michael's College, Tenbury in 1856, to preserve and develop the tradition which he thought was in grave danger of being lost. It was into this milieu that Sullivan emerged as a chorister at the Chapel Royal. Goss was to instruct him in harmony when he became a student at the Royal Academy and on the 29 September 1856, the feast of St Michael, he with the rest of the choir was taken to sing at the dedication service for the college. Ouseley entertained his many friends at his house after the service and the Chapel Royal boys were there to sing in concerted music. Jacobs quotes the memory of a fellow chorister who recalls Ouseley challenging Sullivan to play an extempore piano duet with him, which he did with success; an indication at an early age of his innate musicality (Jacobs, 1984: 13–14).

While it seems clear that although Sullivan's inner life was in no way dominated by his religious belief, it was his sacred music upon which he set the highest value; 'My sacred music is that on which I base my reputation as a composer. These works are the offspring of my liveliest fancy, the children of my greatest strength, the products of my most earnest thought and most incessant toil' (Sullivan in an interview with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 July 1885, quoted in Jacobs, 1984: 218).

However, Bradley makes the point that, after holding various organists' posts, 'Sullivan was more disconnected from the Church than most of those who wrote hymn tunes and anthems' but adds that, 'there is no evidence that he lost the simple trusting faith of his youth' (2013: 181). 'He was more than most a child of Victorian sentimentalism, whose religious sympathies and spiritual yearnings were felt emotionally rather than articulated intellectually, not least in respect of his very characteristic Victorian approach to death and heaven' (2013: 182).

While the spiritual dimension of Sullivan's life has tended to be overlooked or ignored, an error in the opposite direction would do him an equal disservice. He was in some ways a paradoxical figure, at home both in the drawing room and the bawdy house, a worldly figure, yet with a spiritual sensibility; a composer of hymn tunes, anthems and oratorios, but also comic operas. Although these elements appear contradictory, it is notable that they were to remain consistent throughout his life.

1.5 Singing, Virtue and Philanthropy – Musical Style and Social Influence in British Nineteenth-Century Choral Music

Despite the title given to this section, there were several developments in the nineteenth century that made possible the extraordinary popularity of choral music, which were quite prosaic. One was the manufacture of cheap paper that led to the discovery of less costly methods of printing music. Prior to this period, music, which might be described as 'in circulation', would have been available in manuscript copies of varying degrees of accuracy. Printed music was an expensive rarity and in certain areas remained so; orchestral parts for stage works, (Sullivan's comic operas will suffice as an example) were often only available for hire and were usually found to be hand-written. Inevitably there were inaccuracies, but the difficulties were often compounded by the absence of a full score, the conductor having only a vocal score with written orchestral cues to which to refer. By contrast, the symphonic repertoire was published, and this would include the orchestral parts. Finney neatly sums up the situation regarding music for choirs: 'Choral singing as we now know it owes a debt to the very few men in London who, early in the nineteenth century, saw the possibilities of providing the broad-based popular interest in singing with well-printed, adequately edited low-priced music...Their methods were widely imitated' (ed. Jacobs, 1978: 217–18).

In addition, there had been a practice of including some guidance to the rudiments of music in the introductory material included in hymn books and psalters and at this period there was an increased interest in the process, aided by the invention of a number of systems of simplified notation, of which the most widespread was Tonic Sol-fa, partly because it was the most effectively marketed, but it is only one example of such systems. However, the aims were not confined to cultural improvement or to increase musical literacy; it had a moral purpose. McGuire describes it thus:

Borrowing the old belief that music was itself a moral force, its proponents disseminated Tonic Sol-fa notation as part of a carefully crafted plan to improve people's lives with a particularly British slant: to make such individuals morally upright, turn them into practicing (*sic*) Christians (preferably Protestant ones), and guide them to becoming efficient workers. Aimed predominantly at the working and middle classes, the power of Tonic Sol-fa, in the belief of its adherents, would change the world because it aided the teaching of vocal music, becoming the 'People's Music' or 'Music for the Million' – bring the fruits of culture and civilization to a wider swath of society while at the same time raising that swath of society to a higher moral plane... (McGuire, 2009: xv).

In his penetrating study of the movement, McGuire makes the point that John Curwen (1816–80) and his son John Spencer Curwen (1847–1916), from a middle class Dissenting Christian family (i.e. not members of the established Church of England) and the causes they supported by their attempts to use music to reform society, reflect the history of philanthropy during the same period.

From the paternalism of the temperance initiative, evangelical missionaries, Ragged Schools and the Anti-Slavery movement to the more collectivist nature of the concern for women's suffrage and mass demonstrations rather than individual evangelising, although McGuire adds that John Spencer Curwen's own charitable activities still included temperance and missions long after these causes had diminished in political currency. Throughout the nineteenth century it was taken for granted that an improvement in the quality of the music sung would confer benefits in the form of greater social equality and moral improvement (2009: xvi).

The increasing economic prosperity of German and English-speaking countries during this period also had a part to play, as well as the fact that these countries were predominantly Protestant and shared a common cultural and religious heritage. Due to the advocacy of Mendelssohn, the works of J. S. Bach were being rediscovered, initiated in the first instance by the performances he conducted. He then proceeded to augment the oratorio tradition by the composition of *Elijah*, *St Paul* and the *Hymn of Praise* (1840). (Mendelssohn's work as an editor is also of importance and included (with additional accompaniments) both Handel's *Israel in Egypt* and *Solomon*.)

Although for many years after his death Sullivan's name was almost exclusively associated with the theatre, during his lifetime many preferred to think of him primarily as a composer of choral music and it was with the many Festivals which prospered during these years, the Three Choirs, Birmingham and Leeds, that he was most strongly associated. The reasons for this are quite complex and include socio-economic factors that had a considerable impact on those who worked within the field, while at the same time restricting the possibilities available to those who were tempted to try alternatives, such as considering setting texts which were perhaps not biblical or overtly religious.

Sullivan's progress within the genre of oratorio can be viewed as a series of steps towards the secular. In his individual case, this was to be represented ultimately by the opera *Ivanhoe* (1891). In a more general context, works such as *The Prodigal Son* (1869) and *The Light of the World* (1873) are entirely biblical in their choice of text, but *The Martyr of Antioch* (1880), while still suitably religious in character, has a distinct focus on the drama of the narrative. By the time he reached *The Golden Legend* in 1886, the religious element is decidedly subsidiary, though still present. Russell points out that Schumann's *Paradise and the Peri* (1843) had been called an oratorio by the composer 'but for cheerful people' and from the 1890s the secular or at least non-biblical oratorio became more common, with works such as Bantock's *Omar Khayyám* (1906) as an example (1987: 216).

Both Coleridge-Taylor in his setting of *The Song of Hiawatha* and Sullivan, in choosing the poetry of Longfellow, avoided by the discriminating Parry, inadvertently doomed their works to the ghetto of the nineteenth century. Although both were performed frequently up to the time of the Second

World War and have been recorded more recently, neither can be regarded as having a place in the repertoire in the way that *The Dream of Gerontius* has, which, early in its history, faced considerable religiously-inspired opposition. This eased as a more tolerant theology emerged during this period and in the twentieth century, where, in England at least, Roman Catholicism achieved a considerable degree of integration. A choral work by Elgar that might be said to suffer from a type of libretto fated to fall abruptly from fashion, is his setting of O'Shaughnessy's *The Music Makers*, which has never quite found the acceptance given to the others, probably due to a libretto that has come to be regarded as dated.

By the middle of the century most English towns with a population in excess of 20,000 and many smaller had an established choral society. Later three main formats had emerged; there was the medium-sized mixed voice choir, the mixed oratorio choir, often of over 300 voices and the smaller male voice choir, which only achieved real popularity in Wales, one which continues to the present day. Russell makes the point that choralism was never a 'movement' in the way in which the development of the brass band engendered 'a sense of common purpose and mutuality that was evident amongst bandsmen' (1987: 199). This is attributed to the fact that brass band competitions were an integral part of that movement from an early stage, with a specialist press and a narrower geographical base. Choral competitions emerged later in the century when they were as popular and as keenly followed.

The reputation of the Yorkshire and Lancashire choirs became almost unassailable, although many all over the country achieved very high standards. Studies of choral societies that approach them as social phenomena have tended to assume that they were a 'working class' movement. However, Russell points out that the reality was rather subtler and varied enormously, depending on the geographical area. He goes on to say that 'in Yorkshire, choral music had always attracted a middle-class element' (1987: 201). The only detailed study on the social background of choirs during this period comes from parts of the Yorkshire textile district in the 1890s, only a few years after the first performance of *The Golden Legend* in 1886. This would appear to indicate that 'popular choralism crossed class, taking in all levels of 'respectable' society from the skilled working class to the manufacturing and mercantile upper-middle class (1987: 200–1).

By the 1870s British composers had recognised the opportunities that the conditions of the time afforded them. The many festivals were a source of commissions that provided not only income, but also prestige, the promise of at least one performance of an adequate standard and the sale of a considerable number of vocal scores. The first edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, published in 1879, declared that, 'The oratorio is to the musician the exact analogy of what the cathedral is to the architect – the highest art-form to the construction of which he can

aspire' (quoted in Russell, 1987: 215). However, it was also a significant part of what would now be termed the leisure industry of the time and it has some interesting features.

Russell states that the common image of Victorian leisure rarely takes account of 'the substantial presence of the upper echelons of local society within the same organisation as a considerable body of working men and their wives. Significantly, it was the wives and daughters of the *haute bourgeoisie*—more accustomed by a 'philanthropic' role, perhaps, to dealing with the "poor" socially—who were most likely to join in musical alliance with their social inferiors' (1987: 205). However, he goes on to say that the membership of choirs was more likely to be drawn from what he terms the 'respectable lower classes', the lower middle and skilled working class. He quotes some statistics from an analysis of approximately half of the Leeds Philharmonic's membership for 1908-09, which shows a substantial decline in the number of singers from the higher reaches of the social scale. This was based on the occupations of fathers and husbands of the female members. In 1894-5 41% of those surveyed consisted of women whose father's or husband's occupation could be placed in the categories of 'higher professional', 'lower professional', 'employers and proprietors' and the upper reaches of 'managers and administrators'. By 1908-09 this figure had fallen to 32% and the proportion of males whose occupations fell into these categories had dropped from 30% to 17%, a more marked decline (1987: 205-6).

As to what was sung by these groups, for many the oratorio meant Handel and Mendelssohn, at least before 1850, but in the second half of the century the repertoire grew exponentially partly due to changes in the religious temper of the age, which led to a greater acceptance of diversity in types of choral music. The growth of the competitive element in the form of choral competitions similar to those for bodies such as brass bands that had preceded them by some considerable time and the increasing ability of music publishers to cater for the varied demands of the choral market, augmented the tendency to expansion. The repertoire would vary somewhat depending on the size of the body of singers, habit and local preference and a feeling of loyalty to composers who were associated with a geographical area.

Many of the works that were given their first performances at a festival concert are now no more than entries in the lists of those performed by certain choirs. Some received their first and last performance on the same evening, but as Russell says, 'Since the early nineteenth century the choral society has enjoyed the distinction of being perhaps the only amateur artistic institution which has generated the *creation* of art' (Russell's use of italics) (1987: 214). Further, the opportunity was provided for many people to hear, often for the first time, works such as Bach's *Mass in B minor* and *St Matthew Passion*, Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*, Berlioz's *Requiem* and Coleridge-Taylor's *Hiawatha* trilogy. By no means all the festival commissions by British composers can be lightly dismissed, although the dominance of the genre seemed to stifle endeavour in other fields,

partly because they would be likely to be less profitable. In addition, the prevailing sub-Mendelssohnian *religioso* style of writing seemed to sap both imagination and initiative.

The work that finally succeeded in revitalising the English choral tradition, after decades of triviality and tedium and a somewhat uncertain start due to an inadequate first British performance, was Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. This is a work which does not set a literary masterpiece,⁶ but one which the composer very capably adapts to his best musical advantage, as Parry had tried to do with Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. Caldwell tells us that, 'Too little of Shelley's poem was retained for dramatic cohesion; even so, the quantity of decasyllabic blank verse would have daunted even a finer composer than Parry' (Vol. 2, 1999: 261). Therefore, it is ironic that this feat should be accomplished by Elgar, who was not the product of an English public school, university or conservatoire, but was very largely self-taught and in subjects outside music, self-educated. Yet, like Parry, he can be said to belong to the newer breed of English composer who had wide sympathies and varied interests and who represented an integral part of the then current intellectual climate. Elgar's earlier choral works, such as *King Olaf* and *The Banner of St George* may be said to belong to the same world as that of *The Golden Legend*, indeed *Caractacus* (1898) was given its first performance at Sullivan's last Leeds Festival and there are indications that Elgar drew considerable inspiration from his example and he warmly recalled the encouragement he received from the older man on this occasion, despite Sullivan's obviously precarious health.

However, the appeal of the oratorio was far from universal. The aristocracy, for example, tended to reserve their enthusiasm for opera and were unsympathetic to the religious middle classes, who were more likely to form part of the audience at a performance of an oratorio or to be a member of a choral society and this is discussed above.

It was an article of faith with the upper classes that all music worth the name was foreign music, and no-one with an English background was worth taking seriously as a composer. Typical of this mode of thought was Lady de Grey: 'For English composers and English singers she had no sympathy at all—she thought of them vaguely as people who wrote and performed oratorios in cathedral towns (Pearsall, 1973: 141). Pearsall also quotes Jane Carlyle, the wife of Thomas Carlyle, giving her impressions of an oratorio performance (*Messiah*, in 1856) that scandalised what she regarded as the appropriate attitude to the deity: 'Singing about him, with *shakes* and white gloves, and all that sort of thing, quite shocked my religious feelings—tho' I have no religion' (Jane Carlyle's emphasis) (quoted in Pearsall, 1973: 141).

She also cast a critical eye on the chorus, 'packed there like herrings in a barrel, into one mass of sound' (1973: 141). However, not everybody had Jane Carlyle's strong sense of the ridiculous. The

⁶In a letter to Lady Charles Thynne dated 29th October 1865, Cardinal Newman stated that the poem 'was written by accident—and was published by accident' (quoted in Newman, 1986: xix).

static nature of the performance was no obstacle to enjoyment for the majority and it is interesting to note that the first performances in England, of both Gounod's *Faust* and Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Delilah*, were given a form very close to that of oratorio. In the case of the second, this was due in part to the ban on the presentation of religious subjects on stage and it was only in 1910 that it was shown to be the successful opera it is.

Bernard Shaw was almost the only critic who railed against the current fashion for the genre. His attitude can be gauged by the definition of the term he gave in a review in June 1890: '[Oratorios:] Unstaged operettas on scriptural themes, written in a style in which solemnity and triviality are blended in the right proportion for boring an atheist out of his senses' (Shaw, ed. Crompton, 1978: 28). He was also cynical of the inner ring of composers, prominent in the conservatoires, who praised each other's works while writing music which no-one really wanted, (discussed in some detail in 1.6), a sentiment echoed by Elgar in the first of his series of inaugural lectures as Peyton Professor of Music at Birmingham University in 1905. Characterising the South Kensington group as backward-looking, Elgar described them as 'dead and forgotten ... [they] only exist as warnings to the student of the *twentieth century*' (Elgar's emphasis) (quoted in Stradling and Hughes, 1993: 54).

Shaw also questioned the motives of those who attended performances of oratorios in their quest for 'spiritual uplift', while imagining themselves to be purified through boredom. This inevitably led him to some errors of judgment in mistaking what was in fact bread for a stone. As an example, Pearsall relates that Shaw's view of Brahms' *Requiem* was that it 'was so dull that the flattest of funerals would be a ballet after it' (Pearsall, 1973: 145). What is perhaps more remarkable is that no-one before Shaw, certainly no-one of comparable stature, had questioned the supremacy of the genre. However, it fulfilled certain needs: it provided employment for many participants, sustaining the choral tradition and ensuring an audience, nurtured on the works of Handel and Mendelssohn, for those such as Verdi's *Requiem*.

This was the environment in which Sullivan had to work, one that gave the aspiring composer without private means very little room for artistic manoeuvre. His valiant attempts to establish himself as a composer of symphonic music could hardly be described as unsuccessful, but while he could make a comfortable living as a composer of songs, ballads and later comic operas, his credentials as a composer of serious music had to be achieved either by writing a Grand Opera, which he eventually did, or more immediately, by composing a significant choral work for which, as Director of the Leeds Festival, he already had a suitable outlet. The result of this resolution was *The Golden Legend*, from which his opera *Ivanhoe* can be seen almost as a logical development, while ignoring the difference in genre. It is interesting to speculate whether, had Sullivan lived longer and

continued to compose in both the operatic and choral spheres, this process of merging of genres would have continued.

1.6 A Renaissance of Atmosphere? – The Beginnings of the English Musical Renaissance and its Implications for Style in Music

In his book, *Portrait of Elgar*, Michael Kennedy says in his third chapter, to which he gives the title 'Apprentice',

This period of Elgar's life coincides with what is known as the English Musical Renaissance. But the more steadily one looks at those years the less apparent does the renaissance become. It was unquestionably, a renaissance of *atmosphere*. Music began to be taken much more seriously and to be seen as an integral part of human life rather than as mere titillation of the ear... (Kennedy, 1982: 37).

Kennedy does not question or discuss the term, 'The English Musical Renaissance', which indicates to what extent it had become established and then taken for granted. In 1966, Frank Howes had written his study of the phenomenon under that title and Peter J. Pirie used it for his book published in 1979. One of the consequences of Great Britain's success in the Victorian period, in so many fields, was a decided sense of inferiority in others, music among them. The musically knowledgeable owned that Britain had produced no undoubted musical genius since Purcell and the low esteem in which most British music was held on the Continent, certainly in the first half of the nineteenth century, tended to reinforce such perceptions. The emergence of a new English master was earnestly desired and expected and, at the beginning of his career, Sullivan was thought to show sufficient promise of being one. It was in this somewhat tense artistic atmosphere that the term 'English Musical Renaissance' first began to appear in print.

Eatock identifies a review by the critic Joseph Bennett (a later collaborator of Sullivan) as being the first use of the term when discussing Parry's Symphony No. 1 in 1882. The work, he declared in the pages of London's *Daily Telegraph*, offered 'capital proof that English music has arrived at a renaissance period.' Two years later, Bennett elaborated on his support for composition in England, declaring that, 'as regards talented composers and professors, English music was never so fortunate as now' (Eatock, 2010: 89).

Eatock goes on to explain that the idea was supported by other critics such as Francis Hueffer and J. A. Fuller-Maitland, both at *The Times*. The first edition of Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* included biographies of a significant number of living British composers. Fuller-Maitland's book, *English Music in the XIXth Century*, was a further development of the idea and is divided into two sections: 'Book 1: Before the Renaissance (1801–1850)' and 'Book 2: The Renaissance (1851–1900)'. Within it there is a tendency to exclude those who did not conform to

the author's personal perspectives; Elgar was self-taught, had links with trade and was a Roman Catholic; Sullivan's association with the base commercialism of comic opera and what was possibly viewed as an outward lack of seriousness, effectively excluded him for the last 25 years of his career and a figure such as Delius had small claim to be regarded as English at all. It is telling that Fuller-Maitland's autobiography bore the title *A Door-Keeper of Music* (1929); it was an indication of how he saw himself, keeping out the undesirables of whatever kind.

It should also be said that Kennedy's reference above makes it clear that the musical events of the latter part of the nineteenth century concerned more than just the creative aspect, the composition of works which, it was hoped, would outlive their age. Sullivan was deeply involved in many of these activities, as a conductor, as the Principal of the National Training School for Music, later to be superseded by the Royal College and in his sympathy and encouragement given unstintingly to younger composers, as well as his own creative activities. A minority of commentators regard the first English performance of Sullivan's incidental music to *The Tempest* (April 1862) as being a more appropriate starting point, including Young (Young 1972: HMV ESD 7057). If so, then its place was quickly usurped by another work viewed as having stronger claims, which will be discussed shortly.

The various forces at work included not only a different aesthetic from that with which Sullivan was familiar, but other developments in which he would be unable to take a part. These would include the rise of interest in folk music, in the value of the musical heritage of the Tudor and early Stuart period and the later influence of Wagner's legacy, ultimately leading to much more radical experimentation in the field of tonality by Schönberg, Berg and Webern. Setting the comic operas aside, Sullivan's serious music, culminating in *The Golden Legend* and *Ivanhoe*, may be regarded as representing the best that the mid-Victorian period had to offer. However, Sullivan was still part of the world of Sterndale Bennett, Cipriani Potter and George Macfarren in Britain and Mendelssohn, Schubert and Schumann on the Continent and even his most ardent supporters would be forced to admit that he was no innovator, save in his joint creation with Gilbert of the comic opera genre. Both works mentioned above were extremely successful by the standards of the time, but in neither case was that success to be lasting.

Parry's *Scenes from 'Prometheus Unbound'* had been first produced at the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester in 1880 and, as will be seen, has tended to be viewed by many as the appropriate commencement point of the revival in English music. The fact that it preceded *The Golden Legend* by some six years is not of any real importance. Parry's work, like Sullivan's, has its flaws; Parry was unable, at least at this stage in his career, to sustain the drama through music by the constant sense of forward motion that is essential to ensure success (Dibble, 2002: 192). However, what distinguishes it from Sullivan's work is the composer's choice of text, which is an undeniable masterpiece of English poetry. Dibble quotes H. C. Colles, writing in the *Oxford History of Music*, as

follows: 'The choice of subject...itself proclaims a new freedom, and the opening prelude declares the composer absorbed in the imaginative spirit of the quasi-dramatic poem, while the first monologue of the enchained and rebellious Prometheus shows a sense of forceful declamation which English music had not known since Purcell' (quoted in Dibble, 2002: 187).

It is significant that Colles goes on to make a comparison with Sullivan's work, specifically in respect of the declamation, to its disadvantage, 'Contrast it with the opening words of Lucifer in the prologue of Sullivan's *Golden Legend*, so much admired for its dramatic quality when it first appeared at Leeds six years later. Beside Parry's Prometheus the declamation of Sullivan's Lucifer is flaccid and nerveless' (2002: 187).

Colles's special pleading may sound hollow today, but Dibble goes on to make clear that Parry was influenced by Wagnerian declamation and this is another aspect of the work which places *Prometheus Unbound* firmly in the later progressive period of the nineteenth century. More recent commentators have been less enthusiastic than Colles in their estimate of Parry's skill in word-setting, at least in this instance. Caldwell, while admitting the status of the work as 'a landmark in English musical history', despite its shortcomings, adds that 'The wooden declamation of Prometheus' opening monologue is a disappointment after the atmospheric orchestral prelude;' (Vol.2, 1999: 261). Sullivan admired Wagner, particularly *Die Meistersinger*, but his admiration fell considerably short of being tempted to imitate him in what was intended to be a serious work, although at certain points in *The Golden Legend*, he may have done so unconsciously. However, at the Savoy Theatre he was prepared to parody Wagner as readily as any other composer, as in the recollections of his apprentices and guildsmen from *Die Meistersinger* that can be heard clearly in the concluding section of the first act of *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

The true significance of Parry's work is that it represents the first attempt by an English composer equipped, not merely with the requisite musical skills, but also with the intellectual capacity and education to essay a musical setting of a text of unquestionable quality, which he could shape into the form he required. He appears to have had an acute literary sensibility which prompted him to eschew anything that was not of the highest quality.

The use of the bible as a source of texts for choral works was beginning to be less pervasive, but Parry's choice was still a rather unusual one for the period. If Sullivan's work may be said to represent the last and best of the mid-Victorian choral tradition, then it must also be admitted that the standard was hardly an exacting one. Circumstances, not least economic necessity, particularly in his youth, may have forced him to add 'to the deluge of moribund cantatas and oratorios, though he could not prevent his superior talent from making *The Golden Legend* the most passable and attractive of a bad bunch' (1982: 38). However, Kennedy's view of Sullivan's work is less than fair. Even with the brief lapses in quality that it contains, there remains much to admire and enjoy and

to regard it only as being less bad than the rest of such works produced at the time is unjustifiable. Both Parry's and Sullivan's works demonstrate different aspects of the transitional character of British music at this juncture.

The main effect of this fluid process was to neutralise the artistic worth of much that was written in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The problem was one of an unevenness of quality and few composers, until Elgar began to be recognised for the master he was, seemed capable of sustaining the necessary high level of invention for the duration of an entire work and reluctantly, it must be admitted that this would have to include Sullivan, at least as far as the serious side of his output is concerned. Yet, the period was a prolific one with numerous opportunities in the capital and the provincial festivals for having new works performed. However, as Kennedy goes on to say, 'Out of all this activity how much living, creative music has come down to us after nearly a hundred years? Parry's *Scenes from Prometheus Unbound*...is often used as the first milestone on the road to revival...but milestones soon become covered with weeds and obscured from view' (1982: 37).

Another factor that must be considered is the fact that, for some, the mere idea of an English Musical Renaissance was absurd and chief among the dissenters was Shaw. The very words seemed to suggest that the English had succeeded in raising the standard of their native music to a point where it could compete on equal terms with the best that the Continent had to offer; after all, one of the main motives for the foundation of the Royal College of Music was to create a conservatory which could bear comparison with those of Leipzig and Paris.

Shaw was not persuaded and had no scruples about expressing his views with a pitiless clarity. In the following quotation, he is reviewing Parry's *Job* in May 1893, which he admits in his opening paragraph that he had 'been carefully dodging'. After a substantial section consisting of introductory remarks, he states that, 'I take *Job* to be, on the whole, the most utter failure ever achieved by a thoroughly respectable [*sic*] musician. There is not one bar in it that comes within fifty thousand miles of the tamest line in the poem. This is the naked, unexaggerated truth. Is anybody surprised at it?' (Shaw, ed. Bentley, 1995: 260)

Shaw's point is that the subject would have 'taxed to the utmost the highest powers of Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven or Wagner' (1995: 260), just as Caldwell remarks in connection with Parry's aspirations, that the intractable text of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* equally would have done so. Shaw goes on to say that, 'It is the great glory of *Job* that he shamed the devil. Let me imitate him by telling the truth about the work as it appeared to me ... And it must be remembered that I am violently prejudiced against the professorial school of which Dr Parry is a distinguished member. I always said, and say still, that his much-admired oratorio *Judith* has absolutely no merit whatever' (Shaw, ed. Bentley, 1995: 260).

He regarded the Royal College of Music and its many staff as little more than a mutual admiration society, who shamelessly praised each other's works. He made this accusation explicit when reviewing Stanford's oratorio *Eden* (1891).

If you doubt that *Eden* is a masterpiece, ask Dr Parry and Dr Mackenzie, and they will applaud it to the skies. Surely Dr Mackenzie's opinion is conclusive: for is he not the composer of *Veni Creator*, guaranteed as excellent music by Professor Stanford and Dr Parry. You want to know who Dr Parry is? Why, the composer of *Blest Pair of Sirens*, as to the merits of which you only have to consult Dr Mackenzie and Professor Stanford (Shaw, ed. Crompton, 1978: 341).

As has already been noted in his reaction to Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Shaw's prejudices could blind him to the merit of what he heard. Viewed from over a century later, there is a great deal in the music of the Renaissance that can be enjoyed and indeed is of great artistic value, even in parts of the despised choral repertoire of the period, although it is difficult to imagine any of the large-scale works by Stanford, Parry or Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1847–1935) being revived. Shaw appeared to set his face against this particular 'professorial school', as he did against the genre of oratorio, and this undermined his objectivity, particularly when the two elements were combined, as in the example above.

Proverbially, Shaw, like many another prophet, had no honour in his own country and the South Kensington hegemony had arrived to stay. The British musical scene was dominated from the early 1880s by Parry and Stanford and later by their pupils until well into the twentieth century. Their conception of what constituted British music was almost as narrow as that promoted by Fuller-Maitland and those who did not adhere to it tended either to be dismissed as unworthy or unsound. It is a fact that figures such as Granville Bantock and York Bowen, students of the Royal Academy of Music or Cyril Scott, Norman O'Neill, Percy Grainger, Balfour Gardiner and Roger Quilter, all of whom studied in Frankfurt as pupils of Iwan Knorr, wielded considerably less influence in the middle years of the twentieth century than their contemporaries who were products of the Royal College like Frank Bridge, John Ireland, Vaughan Williams and later Benjamin Britten and Michael Tippett. While this may be justified by the fact that the work of these men (very few women have been equally favoured) has better stood the test of time, it must remain a matter for debate as to whether or not this was achieved solely by its high quality or by virtue of their association with the Royal College and the advantages, in terms of superior professional opportunities, that this ensured.

Almost alone, Shaw perceived what posterity's verdict on Sullivan's career might be, despite the efforts of those who were determined to isolate him in a musical backwater. Writing for *The Scots*

Observer in September 1890, Shaw reflects on Sullivan's position; of the comic operas he states that,

The first of the Mendelssohn Scholars stands convicted of ten godless mockeries of everything sacred to [his teachers] Goss and Bennett. They trained him to make Europe yawn; and he took advantage of their teaching to make London and New York laugh and whistle.

A critic with no sense of decency might say out loud that in following Offenbach Sir Arthur has chosen the better part.

Shaw then commends the workmanship of the comic operas, but asks

would the skill that produced these...works have been more worthily employed upon another oratorio, another cantata? When all our musicians are brought to their last account, will Sullivan dissemble the score of [*The*] *Pirates [of Penzance]* with a blush and call on the mountains to cover him, whilst Villiers Stanford and Hubert Parry table *The Revenge*, *Prometheus Unbound*, and *Judith* with pride? On which note of interrogation let us pass (Shaw: ed. Crompton, 1978: 328–329).

In justice to Fuller-Maitland it should be recorded that he later somewhat modified his views as to the worth of Sullivan's theatrical music, making the point that he and many others might be excused for thinking that the humour of the Savoy operas 'must fade with the topics that had begotten them' and that if Sullivan's name were to live on, it would be due to *Ivanhoe* and *The Golden Legend*. However, 'I must honestly confess that the history of these two works has fully proved us entirely wrong. The Savoy operas are today more brilliantly alive than they ever were, while *The Golden Legend*, after its successful performances by every choral society in the country, has been laid on the shelf, and *Ivanhoe* is almost forgotten (Maitland, 1929: 175–6).

Although the period, broadly speaking the last quarter of the nineteenth-century, produced a vast quantity of music, as Kennedy remarks above, Sullivan's output for the theatre and certain other works are among a comparatively small group that retained their place in the public consciousness. His serious music has found a place in recordings and in the case of the choral works, amateur choirs have staged a significant number of revivals, not only of the oratorios, but secular cantatas such as *On Shore and Sea* and *Kenilworth*. Gradually a more balanced view of Sullivan's achievements is emerging having benefited from the renewal in interest in the Victorian age, its literature, visual arts and music.

1.7 Towards a Sullivan Typology - The Significance of Recurring Examples of Style

In her book, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart* (1983), Wye J. Allanbrook identifies a point midway through the second act finale of *Le Nozze di Figaro* where Mozart introduces a specific dance gesture, a musette-gavotte that is associated with the genre of the pastoral. She goes on to say that, 'This musette-gavotte in the second-act finale is doing its work as part of the complex of associations which confirms and defines the role of the pastoral image in the opera' (Allanbrook, 1983: 1). Allanbrook's contention is that Mozart held in common with his audience a repertoire of musical gestures that, in the theory of rhetoric, are termed *topoi* or subjects for formal discourse (Ratner, 1980: 9). There is evidence in Sullivan's stage works that he followed Mozart's example in using specific musical gestures that were, in Allanbrook's phrase, 'part of the complex of associations', but unlike Mozart, these would not necessarily be assumed to be held in common with his audience, although some clearly were, but often it seems that they were personal to him.

The sequence of operas which Sullivan wrote in collaboration with W.S. Gilbert stand apart, not only from other examples of comic opera with which they were contemporary, such as those by Offenbach or Johann Strauss the younger, but from most other types of light opera. To return briefly to Mozart, *Le Nozze di Figaro* has often been regarded as simply a drawing-room comedy, albeit, as Allanbrook remarks, one 'with strong undertones of revolutionary protest' (Allanbrook, 1983: 1). What it would be unlikely to include at this period is any conscious satire based on the conventions of the operatic genre. What distinguishes Gilbert and Sullivan's joint works from others is the fact that the satire encompasses, more than even in the examples by Offenbach, not only the subject matter of the narrative, be it the navy in *H M S Pinafore*, or parliament in *Iolanthe*, but also the musical and dramatic conventions of the operatic form. This was something that would only become more common with the development of the American musical and works such as Gershwin's *Of Thee I Sing* (1931) and its sequel *Let Them Eat Cake* (1933).

These two works take American politics as the object of the satire, but, in addition to including some stock operatic gestures, as Gilbert and Sullivan would have done, there are also features which suggest that the conventions of *their* joint works are themselves being parodied, such as some extremely skilful examples of the double chorus, which is such a notable stylistic feature of Sullivan's stage music. In the case of an example from *Let Them Eat Cake*, which unusually is also the opening chorus, ('Wintergreen/Tweedledee for President'), Gershwin takes the device to an almost unprecedented level of sophistication by incorporating several quotations, mainly from American folksongs, often with political connotations such as *Dixie* (1861), into each of the melodic strands before presenting them simultaneously in the Sullivan manner. This short quotation is a simpler example from *Of Thee I Sing*, which shows the similarity in Gershwin and Sullivan's approach; although, for a chorus of this type, it is often a juxtaposition of male and female groups,

rather than as here, two groups of equal female voices. However, in other respects, the technique used by both composers is the same; the two strands of melody are presented singly and then together as shown below.

Ex.1.6 Gershwin, *Of Thee I Sing*, extract from chorus in Act 1

The musical score is for a chorus in Act 1 of the opera *Of Thee I Sing* by George Gershwin. It consists of two staves, A and B, with lyrics in English. The music is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are:

A: Who is the luck - y girl to be? Who is to
 B: in At - lan - tic Cit - y To meet with the Com - mit - ee; And when they've made their
 A: leave the bour - geoi - sie? Who is to be the blush-ing bride?
 B: mind up, The win-ner will be signed up. The prize is con-se-quen-tial, Pres - i - dent ial! Our

Thus, this characteristic device of Sullivan's comic operas becomes one of the *topoi* in Gershwin's repertory of musical gestures that he would certainly have held in common with his audience for whom Gilbert and Sullivan's works would have been very familiar from the frequent American tours by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company.

In works such as John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), almost all the music would be likely to have been familiar to the audience. It was a mixture of folk songs, numbers taken from *opera seria*, and the adapting the conventions of the pastoral to the wrong sort of low life. The main point of the work was the satirising of the *opera seria* conventions, its music and its morality. As Roger Fiske puts it,

People associated opera with a succession of long arias whose music was hard to grasp and whose words were incomprehensible, and it was piquant, perhaps even funny, to have an opera whose tunes were short and familiar, and whose words made good sense. The plot too was as far removed as might be imagined from those used by Handel, Bononcini, and Ariosti. Instead of cardboard heroes of antiquity, Gay offered very real modern Londoners; instead of noble sentiments, every crime in the calendar. In fact, he satirized Italian opera in the main by upending both its musical style and its moral flavour. (Ed. Noble, 1975: 51)

Gay's successors have continued, with varying degrees of subtlety, to take the same approach, while through time, broadening it to include the operatic styles of both Germany and France, as Sullivan himself did. His comic operas often conclude with a devastating stroke of Gilbertian logic,

which is an echo of the end of *The Beggar's Opera*, where a happy ending is artificially contrived by the arrival of a reprieve for Macheath, for which there has been no dramatic preparation of any kind. The satire here is lost on an audience unfamiliar with the conventions of *opera seria*, where it was usual for the villains to repent of their way of life in the last minutes of the work and to find a life-partnership with a more convenient woman, so that all can live happily ever after. This occurs notably both *The Pirates of Penzance* where the Pirates, having been revealed by Ruth as all being members of the aristocracy, are instantly hailed by Major-General Stanley as appropriate husbands for his daughters. In *HMS Pinafore*, where, as a result of Captain Corcoran's forced departure from the middle classes, he is reduced to the rank of a common sailor, this allows him to pay his addresses to Mrs Cripps (Little Buttercup, the bumboat woman), without impropriety.

Both Gilbert and Sullivan would greatly expand the number of features from the serious opera genre that could be adapted for use in the context of its comic counterpart. In *The Pirates of Penzance*, when Frederic, seeing Major-General Stanley's attractive daughters from a distance, realises that Ruth, his former nurse, has been less than entirely frank about how her physical attributes would be regarded by an impartial judge, confronts her with the words 'O false one! You have deceived me!' In the duet that follows, Sullivan evokes the confrontation scenes to be found in Verdi's operas and others and this is made clear from his use of a characteristic rhythmic accompaniment figure in the orchestra, beginning at bar 8. Six years later, when writing *The Mikado*, and seeking an appropriate stylistic vehicle for Katisha's reproaches to Nanki-Poo, Sullivan again evoked Verdi in the Act 1 Finale. His audience would be likely to recognise the stylistic reference rather than remember the fact that Sullivan had used a similar device in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Another instance occurs in the Finale to the first act of *Iolanthe*, where a self-contained double chorus, which is strongly reminiscent of Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* (1862), expresses the confrontation between the Lord Chancellor and the Queen of the Fairies.

The following two quotations illustrate the point, the first being the opening of the duet in Act 1 of the earlier of the two operas; the second from Katisha's solo towards the conclusion of Act 1 of *The Mikado*.

Ex.1.7 (a) *The Pirates of Penzance*, Act 1, duet from bar 1

Frederic

Oh false one! you have de- ceived me!

ff *mf*

Ruth Fred.

I have de-ceived you? Yes! de-ceived me! You

Ruth

told me you were fair as gold! And,

mas - ter, am I not so? And

Ex.1.7 (b) *The Mikado*, Act 1 Finale, beginning of Katisha's solo from bar 190

Allegro agitato Katisha

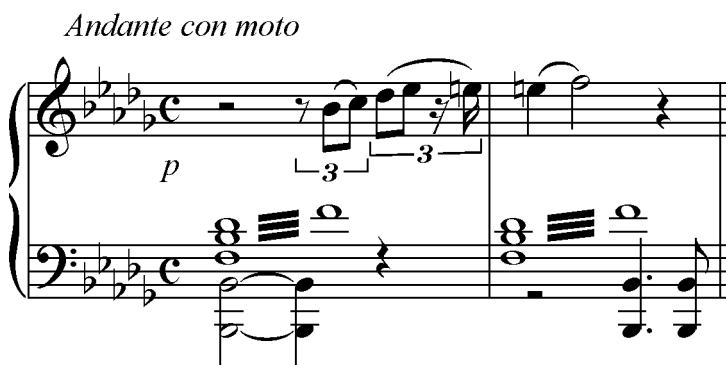
Oh fool, that flee - est My hal - low'd



Sullivan's audience, who would be as likely to attend Covent Garden as the Savoy Theatre, would immediately recognise the dramatic situation as a familiar one and at the same time, commend the appropriateness of the musical allusion, even if they could not place it precisely. It is Sullivan's acuity in such matters which has contributed to the fact that, uniquely in the last twenty-five years of the nineteenth century, he and Gilbert produced a series of works which, contrary to their own and all critical expectations, were to form a permanent contribution to Britain's musical heritage.

If we examine Sullivan's first significant work, his incidental music for *The Tempest*, we find an early example of a *topos* that recurs in his later music (also discussed in 1.1). The first quotation below, Ex.1.8, is the opening of the Introduction to the first act of the play. To those who only know Sullivan's music from his comic operas, this dark, sinister tonal and orchestral colouring may come as something of a surprise. The key is B flat minor and Chorley, reviewing the early performances, characterises this passage as 'gloomy, sinister...there is something of the deep sea in it' (quoted in *SPH*, 2014: 321). Over a quarter of a century later in Scene 3 of *The Golden Legend*, Sullivan is required to portray a seascape and again adopts the key of B flat minor:

Ex.1.8 *The Tempest*, opening of the Introduction to the incidental music



Ex.1.9 *The Golden Legend*, Scene 3, solo for Prince Henry from bar 265

The musical score is written for a solo voice and piano. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 9/8. The vocal line is in the treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: "It is the sea it is the sea, In all its vague im - men - si - ty". The piano accompaniment features a continuous undulating sextuplet figure in the right hand, which is a characteristic motif of Sullivan's style, and a sustained bass line in the left hand.

In the opening of the Introduction to *The Tempest* Sullivan uses a string *tremolando* as an accompaniment figure. The undulating sextuplet figure produces a very similar effect, although notated rather differently. Common to both too is the melodic insistence on the sharpened fourth (E natural) showing the similarity of Sullivan's response to the same in terms of key, orchestral texture and melodic shape, the sharpened fourth in this context being particularly telling.

Sullivan's use of *topoi* can be divided into two categories; there are those instances where he follows Mozart's example very closely by using a gesture which he could be reasonably sure would

be recognised by his audience, if only perhaps half-consciously. In other words, part of the repertoire of such gestures that Sullivan could anticipate that he held in common with them. The second category are those occasions where Sullivan uses a musical gesture, often a stylistic one, such as the reference to Verdi's idiom discussed above, to signify an idea, sentiment or circumstance in a way which was apparently personal to him. This is only detectable by a close reading of the musical sources, where recognisable patterns do emerge. The example quoted above falls into this category, where his response to the idea of the sea, in this instance a somewhat threatening presence, is strikingly similar in works written over 25 years apart.

At this point it would be as well to deal with an instance of what has been thought to be an example of a musical gesture in the first category, one which has been somewhat misunderstood by commentators on Sullivan's music. In chapter 13 of his book, entitled 'A Mixed Bag', Hughes begins by complaining that Sullivan, 'for all that he earned most of his living and nearly all his present-day reputation by writing music for the stage, ... had curiously little SENSE OF DRAMA' (Hughes's emphasis). The evidence he cites for this statement is that, '[in] most of the exciting moments in his operettas...[he] give[s] us nothing more original than emphatic diminished sevenths that may be either *tremolando* or blasting' (Hughes, 1960: 142). The implication here is that Sullivan used this 'threadbare theatrical device' as a type of shorthand in place of an original dramatic musical gesture. Within the genre of comic opera, however, the use of a stock device is to be expected. Indeed, where it may occur, its purpose is most likely to be ironic. One does not complain of simplicity in a folksong or solemnity in religious music. In any event, one should enquire to what extent is this suggestion supported by the facts.

In his first full-length collaboration with Gilbert, *The Sorcerer* (1877), we find that the use of diminished sevenths is reserved for the Incantation Scene towards the end of Act 1. The scene itself is a parody of the Wolf's Glen scene in Weber's *Der Freischütz* (1821), in which the seven magic bullets are cast. The parallel here is with Mr Wells emptying the three phials into the teapot. In addition, the scene includes a deliberate harmonic colouring taken from Berlioz (most likely *La Damnation de Faust*) or possibly Liszt's Faust-inspired works such as the *Mephisto Waltzes* or *Faust-Symphonie* (1857), something to which Sullivan was to return later. Below is the passage following Mr Wells pouring the three phials into the teapot. The Incantation is now complete: note the chromatic sequence of diminished sevenths in the orchestra before the vocal entry of the Chorus of Demons. This is very closely approaching Liszt's musical rhetoric as found in his Faust-inspired works. At the choral entry, he provides a sequence of dominant sevenths, first based on A, which then, using the melodic sharpened fourth, becomes a dominant seventh in E minor and finally an enharmonic G sharp/A flat major.

[illegible]

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Ex.1.11 *H M S Pinafore*, Act 1, Finale from bar 178

Dick Deadeye

(plann'd,) She is a la-dy, you a fore-mast hand! Re - mem - ber, she's your

gall-ant cap-tain's daugh ter And you the mean-est slave that crawls the wa - ter!

In the finale to Act 1 of *Patience*, the passage which follows Grosvenor's recitative (Letter G in the vocal score) also contains some passing diminished sevenths, but most of the chords are actually dominant rather than diminished sevenths. In the Finale to Act 1 of *Ruddigore*, at the conclusion of the Gavotte, Sir Despard Murgatroyd interrupts the celebration with 'Hold, Bride and Bridegroom, ere you wed each other', in unaccompanied recitative, introduced by a loud diminished seventh chord from the orchestra. This would seem to accord with the terms of Hughes's complaint, but it ignores the fact that *Ruddigore* was intended as a parody of what was, even at the time, considered to be the old-fashioned 'Transpontine' melodrama (they tended to be performed in theatres on the south side of the river Thames) and the use here of stock musical devices is likely to be equally intentional and ironic.

Ex. 1.12 *Ruddigore*, Act 1, Finale from bar 191

p *rall.* *attacca* *p* *ff*

Recit
Sir Despard

Hold, Bride and Bride-groom ere you wed each o - ther,

In the second act, to accompany the appearance of the ghostly ancestors, Sullivan returns to the harmonic language of the Incantation Scene in *The Sorcerer*, discussed above, and, in another passage of recitative, just before Sir Roderic's song, he uses a short sequence of *tremolando* diminished sevenths to accompany the words, 'The pity you express for nothing goes...' However, this is counterbalanced by the much more adventurous harmonic language of the song itself, where Sullivan succeeds in modulating from the tonic key of D minor to A flat major within the space of a few bars without any audible sense of strain. (See the discussion of this song in 3.2.)

Hughes's view seems to be based on a combination of misunderstanding and exaggeration. Sullivan's emotional range within the comic operas is far greater than he seems to suppose, and he was capable of much greater dramatic subtlety than he is usually given credit for. However, given the genre, certain stylistic conventions, recognisable from their use in serious music drama, are going to be found, since, to achieve its purpose, comic opera must establish and then maintain its relationship with its serious counterpart, although the means used to achieve this may vary widely.

Another musical gesture of the same type, using a convention specifically from Italian opera, is what might be called the 'perplexity ensemble'. The classic instance occurs in *Trial by Jury* that begins with the Judge singing the words, 'A nice dilemma we have here'. Jefferson points out that this

is a double musical parody, of two Italian operatic ensembles familiar to audiences of the 1870s. It is set and laid out in the same key and style as the quartet 'D'un pensiero, e d'un accento' from Act 1 of Bellini's *La Somnambula* (and Gilbert's libretto calls it 'quartette'); but by increasing the voices to six, it may also be seen as a parody of Donizetti's sextet 'Chi mi frena in tal momento?' from the second act of *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1984: 42).

The key is E flat major, but the climax is in C major, moving within a half bar back to the tonic (on a second inversion chord). Sullivan uses the device again in the first act Finale of *The Sorcerer*, but on this occasion, with no recognisable thematic reminiscences of Italianate models, save in the general shape of the vocal lines. Here, an unexpected E minor chord undercuts the ascent to B major. The tonal goal, so to speak, is D major two bars later, through a simple progression based on the cycle of fifths and then slips back to B major. In the comic operas, this type of ensemble

reaches its apotheosis in the second act of *The Gondoliers*, where the two couples, Marco and Gianetta and Giuseppe and Tessa, sing 'In a contemplative fashion', where each participant expresses their personal point of view in a variation based on the underlying harmonic scheme, accompanied by the other voices in a slow-moving, almost chorale-like theme, doubled only by the orchestral strings. By this stage, all the Italianate stylistic features have virtually disappeared, save the convention of having a concerted piece of music in which each character explains (to the audience) the position in which the plot has placed him or her.

Ex.1.13 *The Gondoliers*, Act 2, Quartet from bar 18

A

Gianetta *pp* *p*
knot. In a con - tem-pla - tive fash-ion, And a

Tessa *f*
knot. I no doubt, Giu-sep-pe wedd-ed, That's, of course, a slice of luck. He is

Marco *pp* *p*
knot. In a con - tem-pla - tive fash-ion, And a

Giuseppe *pp* *p*
knot. In a con - tem-pla - tive fash-ion, And a

G
tran - quil frame of mind, I, a vic-tim too of Cu-pid, Mar-co

T
rath er dun-der head-ed, Still dis-tinct-ly he's a duck. Ev - 'ry kind of

M
tran - quil frame of mind, Free from ev - 'ry kind of

G
tran - quil frame of mind, Free from ev - 'ry kind of

Turning now to those musical gestures which seemed to have a particular significance for Sullivan alone, one occurs where the same musical motif that he would use to characterise the Tower of London in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, is to be found in the introduction to his setting of Shakespeare's lyric from *Much Ado About Nothing*, 'Sigh no more, ladies' (1866). The common

feature here is likely to have been the period in which the opera was set, being both temporally and geographically close to the site of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

The complete introduction to the song is quoted below. (This passage is also discussed in 3.1.)

Ex.1.14 Song 'Sigh No More', piano introduction from bar 1



This may be compared to the opening of the Overture to *The Yeomen of the Guard*, in the piano reduction arranged by J.H. Wadsworth. Most striking is the use of the rising arpeggio figure in the first bar of the introduction and its use in bars 3 and 4 of the Overture and the fact that the quaver figuration is no longer present. Harmonically too, the overture is more austere as compared with the harmony on the second and third beats of the bar in the second bar of the Introduction. Sullivan continues the arpeggio to the fifth degree in the opening of the Overture, but the introduction to the song must move towards a full close before the entry of the voice.

Ex.1.15 Overture to *The Yeomen of the Guard*, vocal score piano reduction from bar 1



Having previously portrayed the sea in its more menacing moods in both his music for *The Tempest* and in the third scene of *The Golden Legend*, it is of interest to note how Sullivan deals with the same subject matter in his incidental music for *The Merchant of Venice* (produced at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester in 1871). The music is concentrated in a single scene, a masque during which Jessica and Lorenzo effect their elopement. Sullivan incorporates the distant cries of the gondoliers into the music during the Introduction, but this is primarily intended as a scene of revelry, so the

mood is largely celebratory. Two of the themes are of significance as they recur in similar contexts. One is to be found in the Bourrée (No.3) and the other in the Finale (No.7) of the incidental music and are quoted below.

When he came to write *H M S Pinafore* in 1878, Sullivan seems to have drawn on his music for *The Merchant of Venice*, either consciously or unconsciously. The opening chorus, Captain Corcoran's song, the double chorus in Act 1, the chorus introducing Sir Joseph Porter, Sir Joseph's song, the last section of the Act 1 Finale and the Trio and much of the Finale in Act 2, all use the repeated four-quavers-in-a-bar rhythm. Sometimes it is written as 2/2 rather than 2/4, but the aural effect is the same, as shown in the two short excerpts given below. The original source is likely to be the traditional Sailor's Hornpipe (Ex.1.17 (a)), with its characteristic semiquaver turn in the melody, which Sullivan incorporates in the second and fourth bar of Ex.1.17(b), and its quaver rhythm accompaniment, as heard, for example, in Sir Henry Wood's *Fantasia on British Sea Songs* (1905). In the case of Ex.1.16 (b), there is a further point of similarity if one examines the melodic line of the Trio in Act 2, 'Never mind the why and wherefore', which is quoted below as Ex.1.16 (c). This was probably suggested by the metre and verbal rhythm of Gilbert's words; however, the quotation is taken from the postlude to the ensemble, where its affinity with the earlier work becomes very apparent.

Ex.1.16

(a) *The Merchant of Venice*, Bourrée from bar 39



(b) *The Merchant of Venice*, Finale from bar 20



(c) *H M S Pinafore*, Act 2, Trio, the postlude.



Both the rhythm and the melodic shape, with its use of a semitone sequence, are similar to the passage from the Finale (b) quoted above. However, it is curious that, when called upon to delineate the stock character of the bragging Jack Tar in *Ruddigore*, Sullivan takes considerable pains to avoid repeating himself and so there are no recollections of *H M S Pinafore* in the later work. Even the Hornpipe that Dick Dauntless is given, which follows his song, seems to be an inversion of the traditional Sailor's Hornpipe, the characteristic melodic turn being the only common stylistic feature. The 4-quavers-in-a-bar rhythm, that so dominates the first act and a considerable portion of the second act of *H M S Pinafore*, is almost conspicuous by its absence, its place taken, at least in the Hornpipe, by punctuating quaver chords on the first three beats only.

Ex.1.17

(a) The Sailor's Hornpipe – traditional from bar 1



(b) *Ruddigore*, Act 1,



In the middle-section of Nanki-Poo's song, 'A wand'ring minstrel I' in Act 1 of *The Mikado*, there are references both to a patriotic ballad and a song of the sea, in which the following passage occurs:

Ex.1.18 *The Mikado* Act 1 'A Wand 'ring Minstrel I' from bar 83

Allegro Pesante, non troppo vivo

Nanki-Poo

taste, But the happ - iest hour a sail - or sees is

when he's down at an in land town, With his Nan - cy on his knees,

It is pitched a tone higher and there are some differences in detail in the melodic line, but otherwise the passage is very like Ex.1.16 (a) above, with the semiquaver turn figure appearing each time on the first beat of the bar in both instances.

The final two examples, which seem to be entirely personal to Sullivan, are brief and appear only twice in his output, yet they are widely separated in time. However, the similarity of the context rules out mere coincidence and it throws further light on Sullivan's thought-processes while in the act of composition.

The first is taken from the second act of *The Sorcerer* and the dramatic context must be made clear: the love philtre having been distributed to the whole company at the end of Act 1, the Vicar, Dr Daly, as the result of his potations, is found yearning for marriage, but to his dismay, he finds that 'all are engaged'. Aline (soprano) is betrothed to Alexis (tenor) and they are the two romantic leads; it was Alexis' mission to bring love to the whole village and it was he who engaged Mr Wells, the eponymous sorcerer, to provide the love philtre as the means to achieve this. At this point, Aline, yielding to her fiancé's wishes, finally takes the potion herself; its effect is to make the partaker fall in love with the next person he or she meets, and Aline intends to go and find Alexis, but is intercepted by Dr Daly and because of the effects of the philtre, they fall hopelessly in love. This

moment is followed by the following orchestral passage that leads to an impassioned duet for the soprano and baritone.

Ex.1.19 *The Sorcerer*, Act 2, duet from bar 1

Allegro agitato e vivace

ff

4

8va

Aline and Dr Daly

Oh, joy - ous boon! oh, mad de light! Oh, sun and moon! oh,

p staccato

Some fifteen years later Sullivan collaborated with Sydney Grundy on *Haddon Hall* (1892). The plot was somewhat loosely based on the now-discredited legend of the flight of Dorothy Vernon from her home at Haddon Hall in Derbyshire in the sixteenth century. Within the opera the elopement takes place towards the end of the second of the three acts. The meeting of Dorothy and her lover, John Manners, is preceded by this short orchestral introduction, shown in Ex.1.20. This is again followed by an impassioned duet, although in this instance it begins with the tenor followed by the soprano and then both voices together.

Ex.1.20 *Haddon Hall*, Act 2, elopement scene from bar 129

Allegro Vivace

f

John Manners

Oh, heart's de -

sire, I see thee once a - gain!

Unlike the quotation from *Haddon Hall*, where the opening C is simply played by the 'cellos and double bass as shown, the passage from *The Sorcerer* begins with an emphatic orchestral chord, probably to signify the magical element. Bearing in mind Hughes's comment, one might have expected a diminished seventh, but Sullivan again uses a dominant one, albeit in its enharmonic form. The rapidly ascending phrase, outlining an arpeggio, reaches a highpoint followed by a descent, likewise based on the same dominant seventh. The duet uses an insistent repeated quaver rhythm that is maintained throughout. In the case of the passage from *Haddon Hall*, there is another ascending figure based on the arpeggio, but with a more rapid harmonic rhythm and a descent that also describes dominant seventh harmony. The piece then settles into a repeated quaver rhythm in the bass with chords doubling the solo voice. The similarities between the two passages are striking, as is the dramatic context and if one were searching for a brief phrase to describe the mood that Sullivan is attempting to express, it would probably be something akin to 'rapturous meeting'. As with Sullivan's evocation of the sea in both his music for *The Tempest* and *The Golden Legend*, faced with a similar dramatic situation, he tended to respond in a similar way.

The final example is little more than an harmonic detail, but its use seems to be unique to this individual dramatic context. In Act 3, Scene 2 of Sullivan's opera *Ivanhoe* Maurice de Bracy, the leader of the Free Companions, who are a band of mercenaries, has been taken prisoner by King Richard during the siege of Torquilstone Castle. He is led into the king's presence to learn his doom and, in view of the aid he has given to the rebellious Prince John, he expects to be executed. However, much to his surprise, the king releases him so that he may warn the Prince to yield to the king's grace without delay. Richard's final words are, 'kneel not, speak not, but live in honesty!'

whereupon de Bracy leaves as he has been instructed, a grateful beneficiary of the king's mercy. As he does so, the orchestra play this short passage

Ex.1.21 *Ivanhoe*, Act 3, Scene 2 from bar 228



The harmony here is a little unusual; it is the coda that follows a conventional perfect cadence with an appoggiatura. Sullivan reinforces the tonic by a pedal over which is given the chord of the supertonic rising to a subdominant chord with its seventh at bar five, the dissonance resolving to a tonic chord with the third at the top, a progression that is shown in bars 5 and 6 above.

The Rose of Persia (1899) was the last score for the theatre that Sullivan succeeded in completing. The plot is extremely complicated, so, for present purposes, it must suffice to state that, at the end of the opera, the central male character, Hassan, a storyteller, must, on pain of death, tell the Sultan a story that ends happily. He is inspired to tell the history of his early life, which, if he is executed, will not, of course, end happily and thus he secures the Sultan's pardon. The song embodying this tale is called 'The Small Street Arab' and otherwise is not very remarkable, save perhaps Sullivan's deft harmonisation. As is usual with the strophic songs in the comic operas, the refrain is repeated by the chorus and the song ends thus after the third verse:

Ex.1.22 *The Rose of Persia*, Act 2, final refrain of Hassan's song

The musical score for Ex.1.22 consists of two systems. The first system features a Chorus part with the lyrics: "The life I lead, is all I need", he knew no bet - ter did the. The second system continues the Chorus part with the lyrics: "luck - y lit - tle chap!". The Orchestra part is written below the Chorus part and includes dynamics like *f* and *p*, and markings like *Ped.* and ***.

The final two bars disclose the same progression as Sullivan used in the quotation from *Ivanhoe* shown above, but in a much more succinct form. In both cases the plot is dealing with the subject of mercy, unexpected in the case of de Bracy, but fervently hoped for by Hassan. There is no indication as to why Sullivan may have associated this harmonic progression with the idea of mercy, but it may simply be a memory of a fragment of Victorian hymnody, with which he would have been familiar having, in 1874, edited *Church Hymns* for the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. Below is quoted the final phrase of F. C. Maker's hymn tune 'Rest', which was sung in the nineteenth century by Nonconformist congregations to Whittier's words, 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind' and this may serve as an example of the type of harmony so often found in hymns of this period.

Ex.1.23 Hymn Tune 'Rest' by F. C. Maker, final cadence

The musical score for Ex.1.23 shows the final cadence of the hymn tune 'Rest' by F. C. Maker. The lyrics are: "In deep - er rev' - rence, praise." The score is written for a single melodic line with a bass line accompaniment.

Looking at the final two chords of the extract above, Sullivan's substitution of a D for the C sharp in the penultimate chord is a significant improvement and prevents what might have been an over-indulgence in sentimentality. Used by Sullivan in this context, the effect is of a strong resolution suggesting that some permanent change has been wrought that will affect the future of the protagonists within the dramatic situation and these conditions apply to both cases.

In his long partnership with Gilbert, Sullivan, accustomed to working under pressure, naturally developed several stylistic habits and tended to respond in a similar way when presented with certain dramatic situations. The vocabulary of musical gestures which may be observed is inevitably not applied with complete consistency, since there is unlikely to have been very much conscious cerebration about such matters on the part of the composer. Nevertheless, his familiarity with Mozart's stage works seems to have prompted him to apply *topoi* in ways like Allanbrook's example quoted earlier. What Sullivan wanted from his audience was recognition in his music of a musical gesture already familiar to them from other sources, such as Italian opera. What he strove to avoid was that recognition occurring because of an audience's familiarity with his *own* music. More than once Sullivan complained to Gilbert that too much of a family likeness was becoming apparent in his music for their joint works.

His approach to the musical characterisation of the sailor Dick Dauntless in *Ruddigore* seems to show him taking steps to prevent this and as remarked above, there is no real stylistic similarity between *Ruddigore* and *H M S Pinafore* or *The Merchant of Venice*, at least as far as the portrayal of this character is concerned, even when one might have been expected. A typology, therefore, is discernible, but within the limits controlled by the composer. On only one occasion did Sullivan deliberately quote from an earlier comic opera within the context of a later one and that was to accompany the re-appearance of Captain Corcoran (now Sir Edward) as one of the Flowers of Progress in *Utopia Ltd.* where the musical allusion was mandatory, since it was initiated by Gilbert in the libretto.

Sullivan's technique in the composition of his music for the theatre was one that would reach its most elaborately developed form in the twentieth century, with the rise of the cinema and the perceived need for well-crafted and dramatically cogent film music that would enhance the force of the narrative without becoming too intrusive. It is, of course, true that much operatic music, before and after Sullivan, operates in a similar way. However, few composers appear to make such a strong audible connection between a stylistic or musical gesture and a dramatic situation consistently throughout an entire body of work. This may partially account for the fact that modern audiences, having grown up with the cinema and television, still respond positively to Sullivan's works, recognising, perhaps at an unconscious level, that the composer's approach to the musico-dramatic issues is one with which they are already familiar.

The varied issues covered by this chapter make it clear that Sullivan's position as a composer in England in the middle years of the nineteenth-century was a complex one. He was the possessor of an undeniable talent that had secured for him both artistic and social advancement by the time he was barely 20 years old. Yet the absence of financial resources would involve him in having to make compromises from the first if he were to succeed at the most elementary level of putting food on the table and a roof over his head. It quickly became apparent that, in addition, he had to meet the expectations of those who had sponsored him thus far, such as Thomas Helmore, Sir George Smart and later Sir George Grove.

Victorian double-standards meant that writers such as Trollope and Dickens and artists like Millais and Frith could be successful both artistically and financially, but for a composer in England it had to be one or the other. As Sullivan's career progressed, it must have been obvious that this was a circle that could not be squared and his friends such as Stainer, whose fears were expressed at the time of the production of his first oratorio, *The Prodigal Son*, came to despair of what seemed to be his waywardness and apparent lack of serious artistic purpose. This was largely due to their inability to appreciate the hard realities of earning a living by composition, which Sullivan was determined to do. Success was obtained at a price and the second chapter traces the various stages through which he passed before emerging with Gilbert as the creator of a new musical genre.

CHAPTER TWO

Influences - The Making of an English Composer

This chapter examines Sullivan's time as a student and his early successes as a composer. Until his meeting with Gilbert in 1871, he had adhered to his own precept of accepting all commissions given to him while for the most part fulfilling the expectations of those who had encouraged him during his time as a student. His two theatrical ventures with F.C. Burnand, *Cox and Box* (1866) and *The Contrabandista* (1867) acquired their significance in retrospect; at the time no-one attached much importance to them in terms of the composer's future development. Yet, his work as an editor for Boosey brought him into contact with the operatic repertoire, at least on paper and the lure of the theatre both as a recreation and a place of work was to become increasingly important as his career developed.

2.1 The Conservatory Student

On 21 September 1856 Arthur Sullivan began his period of study at the Royal Academy of Music in London as the first Mendelssohn Scholar. In 1848 the soprano Jenny Lind (1820–87) had contributed to a concert in London to endow a scholarship in Mendelssohn's memory, but it was to be a further eight years before the committee proceeded to select the first recipient. The scholarship entitled the holder to free tuition at the Academy for one year and Sullivan had succeeded as the youngest in a field of seventeen applicants (Jacobs, 1984: 12–13).

At this time the Royal Academy was not a full conservatory. It had begun in 1823 in premises near Hanover Square, admitting pupils aged between 10 and 15 years, most of whom were boarders. In 1853 the Academy began admitting day students only. There was no equivalent in England to the conservatories of Paris or Leipzig, a fact which provoked a considerable amount of adverse comment and led first to the foundation of the National Training School for Music with Sullivan as Principal in 1876 and ultimately, when this first attempt proved unsatisfactory, to the creation of the Royal College of Music (Jacobs, 1984: 13).

For the first year, until his voice broke, Sullivan remained at the Chapel Royal alongside his studies at the Royal Academy. There his teachers included Arthur O'Leary, (1834–1919) who had studied at Leipzig and had known both Mendelssohn and Robert and Clara Schumann, and Goss for harmony and composition. Frederick Jewson (1823–91), a Scottish pianist and composer and William Sterndale Bennett, whose work as a composer has already been mentioned, taught him the piano.

Almost nothing of Sullivan's compositions from this first period as an Academy student has survived, although biographers have mentioned individual pieces such as a setting for two voices

and chorus of Shakespeare's 'It was a lover and his lass' from *As You Like It* of July 1857 and a year later an Overture (apparently with no title) was performed which received a favourable notice in the periodical *The Musical World*. His progress was deemed to be so satisfactory that his scholarship was extended for a second year and then a third. This would enable him to study at the Conservatory in Leipzig at a more advanced level than London could then provide. He was granted an exemption from all tuition fees in his final year and his father managed to raise sufficient funds to make it practically viable. (Jacobs, 1984: 17).

One man who may be considered to have contributed significantly to Sullivan's early success was the Rev. Thomas Helmore, Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal, to which Sullivan had been admitted as a chorister in April 1854. A convert from Congregationalism, Helmore was motivated by a strong desire to raise the standard of music in the Church of England from the deplorable condition to which it had fallen during the first half of the century. Specifically, he wished to see the return of the tradition of plainsong (although with words in English) and the performance of polyphonic music of the sixteenth century by Tallis, Byrd, Gibbons and others (Jacobs, 1984: 9).

Sullivan's early exposure to church music of a high quality was to affect significantly his musical development, and choral music and specifically oratorio figure prominently in the list of his works not intended for the theatre. Apart from his own contributions to the genre, which included some of his earliest efforts at composition, its influence was detected by some in his stage works, notably Shaw when making a comparison with those of Offenbach. As an example of what Shaw may have had in mind, it is interesting to examine a melodic figure from Sullivan's earliest full-length comic opera, *The Sorcerer* (1877). This is sung in the first act by the ladies' chorus to welcome Aline and Alexis to the ceremony of the signing of the marriage contract before the Notary.

Ex.2.1 *The Sorcerer*, Act 1, chorus from bar 18

Allegretto

With heart and with voice Let us wel-come this ma-ting To the youth of her
choice; With a heart pal - pi - ta - ting, Comes the love - ly A - line!

It is very closely related to this fragment taken from the final imitative section of S.S. Wesley's *Blessed be the God and Father* (1833–34). The metre is almost identical, and the similarity is most likely to be unconscious and not an attempt at parody.

Ex.2.2 S. S. Wesley, *Blessed be the God and Father*, the final section from bar 16

the word of the

SOPRANO
ALTO

TENOR
BASS

Allegretto

the word of the Lord en - dur - eth for

Lord en - dur - eth for e - ver, for e - ver, for e - ver, the

the word of the Lord en - dur - eth for e - ver, en -

ev - er, en - dur - eth for e - ver, the word of the Lord

Sullivan's chorus is pitched a fifth higher than Wesley's, but the melody up to the fourth bar is identical. The change introduced at this point, with the use of an E natural on a strong beat, does not greatly alter the character of the music and it is doubtful whether Shaw was alone in finding Sullivan's theatre music reminiscent of some of the church music of the time.

As shown in the discussion on typology, Sullivan from his first work for the stage (*Cox and Box*, 1866) consciously drew upon the English stage tradition of the ballad opera. Where in the past music from many sources would be adapted for the purpose, by the nineteenth century this had developed into conscious parody or pastiche. In *The Sorcerer* Sullivan's targets are operatic, specifically Donizetti's *L'Elisir D'Amore*, where the idea of a love philtre is as central to the plot as it is in Sullivan's work and indeed forms the title. Also, Weber's *Der Freischütz*, where Sullivan draws upon the Wolf's Glen Scene for his own Incantation Scene, placed just before the Finale to Act 1, but which, of course, is on a much less expansive scale than Weber's original. The reminiscence of Wesley in the extract from the *The Sorcerer* was most likely inadvertent, but Shaw is only one of the commentators who detected the influence of Sullivan's Chapel Royal training within the music of the operas, such as Howes in his study of the English Musical Renaissance (1966: 54) and Eden in his study of the partnership with Gilbert (1986: 159–176).

Sullivan arrived in Leipzig in September 1858. Although Mendelssohn had died some 11 years before, his influence was still strongly felt in the city as it was in England at this period. Amongst other things, as conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra, he had engaged performers from England, notably Sterndale Bennett, in the face of German prejudice and thus had 'made it possible even for a composer from England to be taken seriously' (Young, 1971: 16). The Conservatory was

regarded as the finest music school in Europe and the number of notable names among its alumni is testimony to this; these included Grieg, Janáček, Sinding, Ethel Smyth, Delius and Weingartner.

Sullivan's teachers at Leipzig were Ignaz Moscheles (1796–1876) and Louis Plaidy (1810–74) for piano, Moritz Hauptmann (1792–1868) for harmony and counterpoint, Julius Rietz (1812–77) for composition and Ferdinand David (1810–73) for orchestral playing and conducting. They comprised a formidable group; most were active as composers or critics and were more than specialists in one field (Jacobs, 1984: 20). In 1860, Rietz departed the conservatory and was replaced by Carl Reinecke (1824–1910), who taught both composition and piano and who became the most distinguished of the Conservatory teachers, with pupils who were to achieve eminence throughout Europe and America.

It had originally been intended that Sullivan should become a pianist, but by the end of his first year his promise as a composer was becoming apparent, as were his ambitions to become a conductor and these had been aroused by his contact with David. At his graduation concert in May 1860 Sullivan appeared as both composer and conductor in a performance of an Overture to Thomas Moore's *Feast of Roses*; the same literary source, *Lalla Rookh*, as used by Schumann in his oratorio *Paradise and the Peri*. The review in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* was far from unfavourable, but the quotation, given at length by Young, concludes with the following comment: 'the overture is so completely conceived in Mendelssohnian style that it is not possible to give a proper opinion on the future prospects of the composer's independent creative ability (quoted in Young, 1971: 22).

One of the advantages of study in Leipzig was the close relationship between the Conservatory and the Gewandhaus that enabled students to enjoy some public exposure. The Gewandhaus committee were also quite prepared to provide opportunities to students from outside Germany. For the British, conditions in Leipzig in this respect were rather more favourable than those at home, where the opportunities to perform or have compositions played were often more difficult to find. However, one obstacle to success was the innate conservatism of the institution. One event which illustrated the divide between those of a conservative outlook, and this would have included most of the teaching staff, and the proponents of 'the New Music' was the performance in January 1859 of Brahms' D minor Piano Concerto, played by the composer⁷ with Rietz conducting. It was received in almost complete silence, save for the applause of two or three members of the audience and the expressions of disapproval from those who felt the need to protest against what they could not understand (Jacobs, 1984: 24).

The *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* actively promoted the cause and its proprietor, Karl Franz Brendel, held Sunday soirées that exerted a considerable influence on public opinion in Leipzig and the

⁷ Although Brahms appears to have been often associated with Leipzig at this point in his life, he was never a student at the conservatory (Latham, 1975: 25).

formation of taste. They were attended by eminent artists and students alike, and Brendel used these occasions as an attempt to reconcile the opposing factions. Inevitably, given his vast influence both as a composer and an administrator, the music of Mendelssohn was regarded as the standard by which new music was judged. Only a few would have had a comparable regard for Schumann, and Liszt was regarded with deep suspicion (Young, 1971: 19).

The concert programmes given at the Gewandhaus were, as might have been expected, conservative, but more enterprising than those of the Philharmonic concerts in London. The standard works of Beethoven, Mendelssohn were performed as well as some Schumann in addition to the Brahms Piano Concerto referred to above. Excerpts from Wagner's *Lohengrin* had been given in 1858, just before Sullivan's arrival in Leipzig. During the same two-year period, 1859-60, at the opera house, Leipzig had the opportunity to hear Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, Nicolai's *Die Lustigen Weiben von Windsor* and again Wagner's *Lohengrin*. Mozart was represented by *Don Giovanni* and *Der Schauspieldirektor* and Verdi, by *Il trovatore* and *La traviata*, which were given by a visiting Italian company in early 1861 (Jacobs: 1984: 24).

This early exposure to a wide variety of new music, much of it by living composers, in a comparatively short time and at an impressionable age, certainly kindled Sullivan's musical imagination. Memories of the works mentioned above can be discerned in Sullivan's own music, often many years later and inevitably in the comic operas where allusions to other operatic models might be expected. An example is this phrase from the final ensemble of Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor*, which Sullivan may have had the opportunity to hear.

Ex.2.3 (a) Mozart, *Der Schauspieldirektor*, final ensemble from bar 26

The musical score shows three staves, each with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first staff is for Madame Herz, the second for Mademoiselle Silberlang, and the third for Monsieur Vogelsang. All three characters sing the same lyrics, which are written below each staff. The lyrics are in German and describe an artist's aspiration. The music is marked with a forte 'f' dynamic.

Madame Herz
 f Kunst - ler muss - en frei - lich stre - ben stets des Vor - zugs werth zu__

Mademoiselle Silberlang
 f Kunst - ler muss - en frei - lich stre - ben stets des Vor - zugs werth zu__

Monsieur Vogelsang
 f Kunst - ler muss - en frei - lich stre - ben stets des Vo - zugs werth zu__

p

sein doch sich selbst den Vor-zug geb - en, u - ber, an - dre sich er - he - ben

p

sein doch sich selbst den Vor-zug geb - en, u - ber, an - dre sich er - he - ben

p

sein doch sich selbst den Vor-zug ge - ben, u - ber, an - dre sich er - he - ben

(b) *The Gondoliers*, Act 1, Quintet from bar 1

Allegretto Moderato

Casilda

Try we life long, we can nev - er Straight - en out life's tan - gled skein,
Duchess

Try we life long, we can nev - er Straight - en out life's tan - gled skein,

Luiz

Try we life long, we can nev - er Straight - en out life's tan - gled skein,
Duke

Try we life long, we can nev - er Straight - en out life's tan - gled skein,
Inquisitor

Try we life long, we can nev - er Straight - en out life's tan - gled skein,

Why should we, in vain en- deav - our, guess and guess and guess a- gain?

Why should we, in vain en- deav - our, guess and guess and guess a- gain?

Why should we, in vain en-deav - our, guess and guess and guess a- gain?

Why should we, in vain en-deav - our, guess and guess and guess a- gain?

Why should we, in vain en-deav - our, guess and guess and guess a- gain?

Mozart's ensemble begins at the middle point in the bar and is for three voices. Sullivan's is for five voices, but with the two lower ones doubling each other in places and begins on the first beat of the bar. The similarity is strongest in the first four bars; Sullivan makes more use of dotted rhythms and slurred quavers and Mozart's second four-bar phrase is quite plain by comparison, although becoming more florid in subsequent phrases. However, in overall shape, the resemblance is clear. Hughes notes the influence of Mozart in the texture of the middle section of Sullivan's quintet and that 'it owes something ... to "Wir wandeln durch des Tones Macht" from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, 'but in no other (respect)' (1960: 77). Generally, the point of resemblance discussed above does not appear to have attracted any other comment.

The effect of hearing the Schubert's Ninth Symphony also seems to have made a deep impression on Sullivan as a comparison of seven bars of the first movement with thirteen bars from the development section of Sullivan's Overture *In Memoriam* (1866) illustrates.

Ex.2.4 (a) Schubert, Symphony No.9 in C, first movement from bar 199

Bar 199

Violin 1

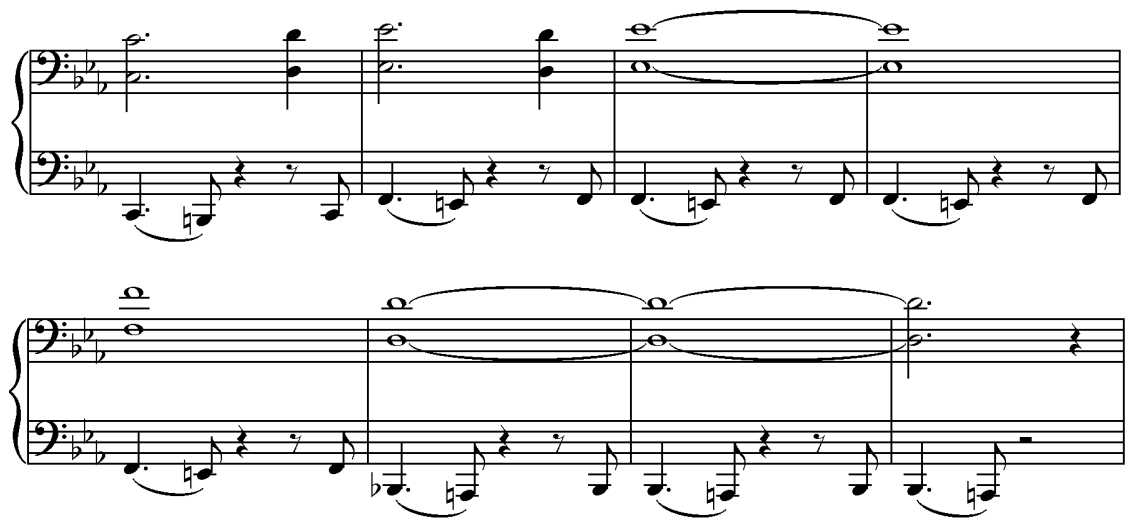
Trombones

Bassi pizz.

(b) Overture *In Memoriam*, development section from bar 375

Trombones

mp Lower strings



Perhaps the most striking point of resemblance is in the use of orchestral sonority, the thematic material being given in both cases to the trombones, accompanied by the strings. Sullivan, in choosing the lower strings to accompany the brass, makes the effect of his passage quite different, however. Schubert's movement is positive, with the trombone line suggesting a suspicion of a shadow over the landscape. Sullivan, however, is setting out to depict a much bleaker terrain, with the strings placed an octave below the trombones playing an accented dotted rhythm. Nevertheless, the debt to the earlier composer does seem clear.

Sullivan now turned his attention to writing a work that became the most significant of his early compositions and the only one from his time a student that had any independent later life. In concept, it owed something to Mendelssohn's incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but stylistically Sullivan's incidental music to *The Tempest* is much more than a competent imitation of his style and indicates the first signs of some creative independence, if only, at this stage, by a display of a wider variety of influences. In the Nymphs' and Reapers' Dance Mendelssohn's influence is still marked, the movement recalling the Scherzo from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Of greater interest is the Overture to Act IV, which is the longest single movement. Here, for the first time, Sullivan demonstrates not only his admiration for Schumann, but that he has successfully absorbed his style and can reproduce it with the same degree of skill that he had previously shown when imitating Mendelssohn. Below is quoted the opening main theme.

Ex.2.5 *The Tempest*, Overture to Act 4 from bar 10





This theme is played by the wind instruments accompanied by light *pizzicato* strings and begins what is a short sonata form structure. The detailed articulation and the melodic shape of the phrases are worth noting. These may be compared to the following themes taken from the fourth movement of Schumann's *Symphony No.1* 'The Spring' and the first movement of his *Symphony No.4*.

Ex.2.6

(a) Schumann, *Symphony No.1*, fourth movement from bar 6



(b) Schumann, *Symphony No.4*, first movement from bar 29



Schumann's two themes have factors in common; the four-note figure in the form of a turn that includes a chromatic element with C sharp becoming C natural in a descending sequence. Sullivan also makes use of this figure, but in repetition rather than sequence, the first two statements in the tonic major, but the next pair in the relative minor. The movement contains several features that can be traced to these two movements by Schumann.

The significance of Schumann's influence on Sullivan is that his music was still comparatively unknown and was to gain acceptance only gradually. For Sullivan his incidental music to *The Tempest* was the means by which he established himself almost immediately on his return from Leipzig as England's most promising composer. The performance of the entire work with narration at the Crystal Palace on 5 April 1862 (only 6 of the 12 movements had been played at Leipzig) was hugely successful and greeted with acclaim by the press. Sullivan's career had begun in the best possible way.

2.2 The Young Composer in London

In the London of the 1860s public music making was dominated by the concerts at the Crystal Palace. There were, of course, other established concert series such as those given by the Philharmonic Society under Sterndale Bennett at the Hanover Square Rooms and its rival 'The New Philharmonic Concerts' at St James's Hall. Longer than would be usual today, the programmes tended to be mixed, with a reliance on solo instrumental items and operatic extracts and were grounded in the period from the late eighteenth to the mid nineteenth century, broadly speaking from Haydn and Mozart to Rossini and Spohr (Jacobs, 1984: 29).

August Manns (1825–1907), a Prussian military bandmaster, had been appointed conductor at the Palace in October 1855 and almost his first action was to replace the military band with an orchestra. On weekdays the choice of music tended to be light, but on Saturdays the ensemble expanded to accommodate more demanding repertoire. Within a year he had already performed works by Schubert, Schumann and Wagner, including Schubert's Ninth Symphony and Schumann's Fourth. He was also prepared to sponsor works by living English composers such as Balfe (1808–70), Wallace (1812–65) and Macfarren (1813–87) and the Crystal Palace became almost the only venue where contemporary music could be heard, played by a professionally trained orchestra.

Early in 1862 a private performance of Sullivan's music to *The Tempest* took place at the house of the critic, Henry F. Chorley (1808–72), with whom Sullivan was later to collaborate on an opera, *The Sapphire Necklace*, (1864–67) which was never performed, although the Overture has survived. Among those present at the performance was George Grove (1820–1900), the Secretary of the Crystal Palace, who shared with Manns the responsibility for the choice of programmes. This series of concerts conducted by Manns, lasted until 1901 and the policy of playing music by living composers, both British and foreign, had a far-reaching influence on generations of composers (Young, 1971: 33).

Grove seems to have sensed the potential significance of Sullivan's work and arranged to have it performed at the Palace on Saturday 5 April 1862. It was an outstanding success and the press were enthusiastic in their praise. From the point of view of Sullivan's development as a musical stylist, Chorley's review in the *Athenaeum* contains a telling comment; while stating that it had been many years since so promising a work by a young composer had been heard, he concludes by adding, 'one so full of promise ... so much skill, and so few references to any model elect' (quoted in Jacobs, 1984: 27). This last statement was only partially true, as the formal design owed something to Mendelssohn's example in his music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as has already been mentioned. For Sullivan, and for those who had taught him, Mendelssohn's style was the current musical *lingua franca* on to which he had succeeded in grafting some references to Schumann, but not, at this stage Schubert. This was a slightly later development, partly stimulated

by his personal involvement with Grove in the rediscovery of various Schubert scores in Vienna that had lain undisturbed since the composer's death. In the eighteenth century Handel's presence in London had made a deep impression on other composers working there at the same time. In the nineteenth century Mendelssohn achieved something comparable by his visits to Britain, his performances in centres such as London and Birmingham and the patronage of the royal family. The difference was that music in England was at a much lower ebb than it had been a century before and so Mendelssohn's influence was, if anything, even more pervasive, since it encountered less native resistance.

In the biographical book prepared with Lawrence and apparently based on a series of interviews with Sullivan, it is stated that, after the success of the incidental music to *The Tempest*, 'whatever doubts and fears he may have entertained up to that time, he then definitely decided to avoid teaching and to rely upon composition' (Lawrence, 1899: 50). In fact, the variety of activities in which economic necessity forced Sullivan to engage at this period was considerable and however much he may have wished to avoid teaching, this proved to be impossible. He taught for the Crystal Palace Company's School of Art, Science and Literature and in 1865, joined the staff of the National College of Music. At the same time, he was Organist of St Michael's Church, Chester Square and of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden under Costa. The latter post gave him some official standing as well as access to rehearsals and the opportunity to hear a great deal of operatic repertory without too regular a commitment, operas requiring the use of the organ being comparatively rare. Sullivan's determination to make his living as a composer meant that, as he said to Lawrence,

I was ready to undertake everything that came in my way. Symphonies, overtures, ballets anthems, hymn-tunes, songs, part-songs, a concerto for the violoncello, and eventually comic and light operas, nothing came amiss to me, and I gladly accepted what the publishers offered me, so long as I could get the things published (Lawrence, 1899: 50).

This resolution was to have permanent and lasting consequences for Sullivan's future career and his later reputation.

Sullivan's contributions to the genres of comic opera and choral music at this period are discussed in both 1.7 and in 3.5. From the point of view of his progress within his chosen career, in the first 10 years or so, it is his orchestral music that is most significant. Indeed, after 1870 there is no purely orchestral music by Sullivan, save the *Imperial March*, later incorporated into the ballet *Victoria and Merrie England*, written to celebrate the 1897 Diamond Jubilee. Setting aside the lost works of his student period and the occasional pieces such as the Princess of Wales's March of 1863, what remains is the Symphony, the Cello Concerto and three Overtures.

The version of the Cello Concerto extant is a reconstruction by Sir Charles Mackerras and David Mackie based on the surviving solo part and Sir Charles's recollections from having conducted the work before the disastrous fire at Chappell's, Sullivan's publisher, in 1964, when the score was lost. For that reason, it really has to be excluded from any discussion of Sullivan's style, save perhaps as regards its form, which remains clear from the surviving evidence. It is in a single movement but divided into three linked sections. The reconstruction is very skilful, but unavoidably speculative in places and for that reason, cannot be discussed in detail.

The Symphony in E was sketched out by Sullivan during the summer of 1864 when staying with friends in Belfast but was not performed until March 1866 when Manns agreed to include it at the Crystal Palace, partly persuaded by the advocacy of the singer Jenny Lind. The delay was due to the fact that, as Young remarks, 'the production of a British symphony was a risk most managements were reluctant to take' (Young, 1971: 40). In terms of chronology, it is the first significant work by Sullivan for purely orchestral forces after his incidental music to *The Tempest* that, in its final form, included songs and melodrama (speech over music).

The review in *The Times* was perceptive about Sullivan's obvious debts to older composers and throws an interesting light on how some were regarded. Sullivan was advised to, 'Abjure Mendelssohn, even Beethoven, and above all, Schumann for a year and a day ... and study the most legitimate and natural models, in the works of Haydn and Mozart, trusting to himself for the rest...Mr Sullivan...though young, is already shrewd enough to have steered clear of that dangerous quicksand, Spohr, the most mannered of all mannerists' (quoted in Young, 1971: 41).

The impression made by the symphony is one of Sullivan consolidating his both his technique and his personal style. The blend of influences, while still detectable, is better integrated with Mendelssohn perhaps dominating. The arresting opening of the work leads to a statement of the 'Dresden Amen', as used by Mendelssohn in his 'Reformation' Symphony. Taylor makes the point that both Mendelssohn and Schumann tended to ensure what he calls an 'organic' connection between the introductory material and the ensuing main section of the movement and that Sullivan follows this precedent closely (SP1, 2012: 99). It is also true that Sullivan's thematic transformation technique shows in the close connection of the material in the body of the movement to its opening theme, played by the Bassoons, Trumpets, Trombones and Horns.

Ex.2.7 Symphony in E, first movement from bar 1

(a) Opening theme



(b) Transition played by first Violins leading to the...



(c) Beginning of the first subject group, played by the first Violins



(The likeness of (c) to the main theme of the Overture *di Ballo* should also be noted. See Ex.2.11 (b) below)

In his discussion of the first movement, Young states that, Sullivan found the conventions of sonata argument 'rather wearisome' and that the material in the first subject is 'developed through confrontations with varied sonorities' (Young, 1971: 87). However, Taylor detects in the episode beginning at bar 242, which recalls the widely-spaced string writing in the introductory section, a use of Mendelssohn's *Hebrides* Overture, specifically the development section, as a possible model (SP1, 2012: 103).

While in terms of Sullivan's output the symphony is significant, as far as his development in musical style is concerned, it does not represent a genuine advance on his music for *The Tempest*. Had his second symphony been written, then it is possible that it would have brought him to this next stage, but his career was to take an unexpected direction that would lead him away from symphonic composition.

The three Overtures from this time are *In Memoriam*, *Marmion* (after Scott's narrative poem) and *di Ballo*. The Overture *In Memoriam* began as a commission for the Norwich Festival of 1866 and initially Sullivan had difficulty in settling on a subject. Then, quite suddenly, his father, Thomas Sullivan, died unexpectedly and the work became his memorial. By 1866 Sullivan had visited Vienna with Grove and rediscovered the Schubert works referred to earlier; the influence of his Ninth Symphony in the development section of the work has already been noted. Another stylistic

element that can be traced to Schubert is Sullivan's partiality for repeated notes. This became something of a mannerism and can be regarded as one of the most characteristic of his stylistic traits as the following examples from various times in his career demonstrate:

Ex.2.8

(a) Hymn Tune 'St Gertrude' 1871

On-ward, Chris-tian sol - diers, Mar-ching as to war,

(b) *The Light of the World* 1873 'In Rama was there a voice heard'

In Ra - ma was there a voice heard lam - ent ta - tion and
weep - ing and great mourn - ing,

(c) *Ruddigore* 1887 Act 2, 'Painted emblems of a race'

Tenors and Basses
Grave maestoso

p Pain-ted em-blems of a race, All ac - curst in days of yore,

(d) *Utopia Limited* 1893 Act 1 'Knightsbridge nursemaids, serving fairies'



The source appears to derive from Schubert's *Fantasie* in C major, D760 (1822), based on his song 'Der Wanderer' D493. As a point of comparison, given below are the opening bars from the middle section of the work (*Adagio*), which is in the key of C sharp minor; the resemblance is strongest in the minor key examples above, from *The Light of the World* and *Ruddigore*, and, in a sense, they may be regarded as more 'successful' borrowings on Sullivan's part, the major key examples perhaps less so.

Ex.2.9 Schubert, *Fantasie Der Wanderer* D760, beginning of middle section



The example above that seems closest to Schubert's original is (c), despite the different time signature. The placing of the dissonance on the first beat of the fourth full bar in (b) above and the first beat of the seventh bar in (c) is of interest and may be compared to the third beat of the third bar in the quotation from Schubert. His is a stronger discord than Sullivan's, but its placing within the phrase is similar, although its resolution differs. The resemblance between (a) and (d) shows Sullivan's tendency to be drawn by metrical similarity and the effect in this instance is almost an unintentional parody. It should be admitted that this tendency to use repeated notes was characteristic of much choral music and particularly hymn tunes written at this period by composers, such as Stainer and J.B. Dykes (1823—76). The significance in a discussion of Sullivan's music is that it appears in his contributions to so many different genres.

Sullivan's first theme in the Overture is presented in the major and seems to have its origin in the same source:

Ex.2.10 Overture *In Memoriam* from bar 13



More than any other part of his serious output, except the song *The Lost Chord*, this passage has attracted much negative comment as being insufficiently expressive of even personal grief, however distressing. As Jacobs comments, 'In the slow, hymn-like opening tune it is the repetition of the single note which traps Sullivan into banality—as later, and even more obviously, in *The Lost Chord*' (Jacobs, 1894: 43). It became a boon to his detractors, with Walker railing against its 'abysmally cheap sentimentality' (Walker, 1924: 293) and Howes claiming that it 'has justly been pilloried' (Howes, 1966: 54). It most effectively demonstrates the degree to which Sullivan's serious art trod an extremely narrow line between nobility and bathos, but Jacobs' comment begs the question, since banality tends to be in ear of the listener and the use of repeated notes does not necessarily suggest banality *per se*.

To avoid this impression when presenting this opening theme in performance, which is possible, demands considerable skill on the part of any conductor for two reasons; it needs to be played very slowly, preferably in a generous acoustic⁸ and the voicing of the wind chords needs careful attention. After the first quiet version of the theme on a wind group, it is repeated with fuller scoring including brass and divided lower strings, a rich texture, but with the melodic line given to trumpets doubled by horns in unison. These should, as it were, 'cover' the trumpets, but in most recordings and performances, the balance favours the more assertive instrument. The question of orchestral sonority as a component in Sullivan's style is discussed fully at 3.1, but at present it is enough to note the difference that such a factor can make, at least in part, to the supposed perception of worth.

⁸ The unsympathetic Howes (1966; n.54) quotes a comment from Sir Stanley Marchant, a former organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, whom he reports as having said that 'when the overture is played in [the Cathedral] sufficiently slowly for the acoustics of the building the banality of the theme disappears into spacious grandeur'.

As an illustration of this tendency, for some commentators, the melodic use of the brass in this way appears to recall the crudities of some Victorian light music, such as Meyer Lutz's *Pas de Quatre*. This was part of a score of a burlesque called *Faust up to Date* (1864), a parody of Gounod's opera, and it went on to have an independent life as a standard piece of theatrical utility music. Below are a few bars from the middle section where the thirds are given to a pair of cornets rather than trumpets, as this is a theatre piece, accompanied by the strings.

Ex.2.11 Meyer Lutz, *Pas de Quatre* from bar 41



At this period trumpets were used in concert music, but in the theatre, it was the quieter, smaller bore cornets that were still standard. Sullivan treats them in a similar way in the opening of the Overture to *Patience*, (although his pupil D'Albert seems to have had considerable involvement in putting it together) (Cambridge, 2009: 243), and in the *Water Music* from the incidental music to *Henry VIII* where the less prominent tone colour is more appropriate to the thematic material. Sullivan was capable of much greater subtlety than this melodic use of the cornets perhaps suggests, and his intimate knowledge of wind instruments meant that he could calculate internal balances accurately. The use of trumpets in place of cornets in twentieth-century performances and recordings is regrettable, since it distorts these balances.

The recordings of *In Memoriam* by Sir Vivian Dunn in 1971 and Andrew Penny in 1993 both use trumpets. Penny also included the incidental music to *Henry VIII*, with the *Water Music* referred to earlier. Only one recording of a Sullivan opera has attempted to recreate his orchestral sound-world accurately and that was one of *The Rose of Persia* in 1999, (*BBC Music Magazine*, May 1999, Vol.7, No.9) conducted by Tom Higgins with the Hanover Band, using nineteenth-century orchestral instruments. The use of contemporary instruments and performance practices has enabled the music to be heard with the correct sonorities and balance as the composer intended and the difference in effect is often very marked.

The main body of the movement is a substantial exercise in sonata form, well-proportioned and leading ultimately to a final statement of the opening theme for the full orchestra with the addition of the organ. Hughes condemns this conclusion as an instance of Sullivan allowing 'his discretion to be overborne by the sheer weight of the forces available', citing the end of the Festival Te Deum as another example of the same fault (1960: 96). However, Young makes the point that the charge of

vulgarity, so often made against Sullivan by unsympathetic critics, while not wholly without foundation, disregards the fact that works such as these may be redeemed by the authenticity of the expression and that the Victorian age was indeed a vulgar one. 'This Te Deum...has the ring of truth: this is the English people in the high summer of Victorian optimism' (Young, 1971: 91).

In the early twenty-first century scholars such as Taylor, Scott and Goulden now view the Victorian age rather more sympathetically and even when Sullivan's serious music was decidedly unfashionable, writers like Hughes somewhat reluctantly admitted that the work 'has a solid dignity that is quite impressive' (1960: 12). It invites comparison with Sullivan's most famous song (outside the stage works), 'The Lost Chord', written under similar circumstances, in this case the death of his brother and, like the overture, still able to impress the listener, not only with the composer's obvious sincerity, which, in any event, would not be said to redeem a poverty of invention, but with what might be termed, the acuity of his spiritual vision. As Derek B. Scott says of the song, 'The appeal of 'The Lost Chord' lies not in its depiction of a numinous experience, but in conveying a feeling of loss...and an optimistic faith in death as the final comforter and the solver of mysteries' (Scott, 1989: 147).

It is enlightening to compare the climactic moments of both works; in the song, at the words, 'it may be that Death's bright angel will speak in that chord again', the slow-moving harmonies in large chords (for piano and harmonium) and Sullivan's characteristic use of repeated notes do tend to recall the earlier work, since the overture concludes with what is in effect a decorated plagal cadence or 'grand Amen' and Scott's comment about the song might be said equally to apply to the overture.

The Overture *Marmion* (1867) was later adapted by Sullivan in a very truncated form, as the Overture to Comyns Carr's play *King Arthur* (1895) for which Sullivan supplied the incidental music. It is a significant work because it shows the possible early influence of Berlioz in the orchestration and this is discussed in some detail in 3.1 with the possibility that Sullivan used or at least knew of Berlioz's book on orchestration.

The so-called *Overtura di Ballo* (sic) was Sullivan's last purely orchestral work apart from the *Imperial March* of 1893. It was written for the Birmingham Festival of 1870 and has some claim to be regarded as Sullivan's most satisfactory essay in orchestral music, although his music for *The Tempest* is also a strong contender. However, it is open to doubt whether it can be said to fall into the category of 'pure music'. The title, as given above, derives from Sullivan's unwise assumption that there was an Italian form of the French *Ouverture* and it has usually been known since as the Overture *di Ballo*. As with the incidental music to *The Tempest*, which recalled Mendelssohn's music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the concept of the work appears to owe something to Weber's

Invitation to the Dance (1819), originally written for the piano, but which has become better known in the orchestration by Berlioz (1841).

In both works the 'programme' seems to take the listener from the first step of inviting the lady to dance, after, in Sullivan's case, an initial 'call to attention' from the orchestra in the manner of a Haydn symphony. Weber's work begins and ends quietly; Sullivan's concludes in a blaze of energy. Weber dedicated the work, the first 'Concert Waltz', to his wife and provided a detailed programme of the sequence of events depicted within, concluding with the lady being escorted back to her seat, a passage which balances the restrained and atmospheric beginning of the work, which is the 'invitation' of the title. After the first few bars of Sullivan's overture, he quietly establishes the atmosphere, using the large orchestra with great delicacy, before presenting the first dance theme. The musical material increases in animation as the overture progresses, culminating in a *galop* upon which the coda is based. The programmatic elements are much less clearly defined than in Weber's work, and Sullivan never seems to have suggested that there were any, but the essential elements are similar.

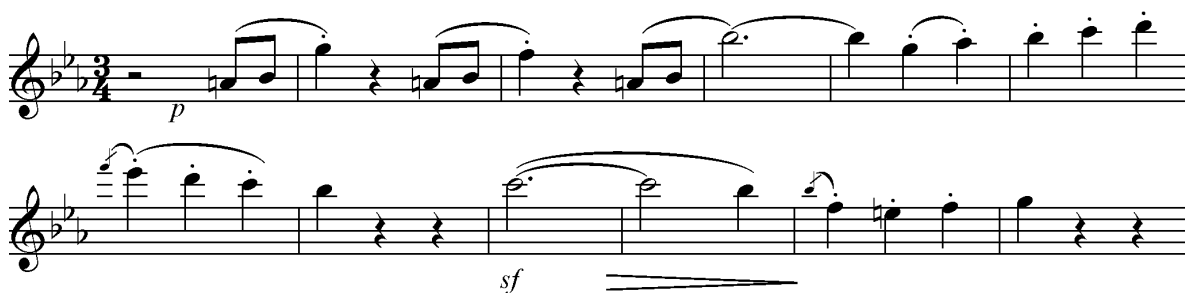
In discussing *In Memoriam*, Young says that it 'falls down on its thematic content and on its lack of purposeful energy in thematic development' (Young, 1971: 87). In *Di Ballo* Sullivan takes a different course in the treatment of his material which is not developed in the symphonic manner but transformed; a technique to be found in Schumann's and Liszt's music and possibly owing something to the latter's example in this respect, but in no other, since Liszt's influence is not otherwise apparent in the overture. Given below are the versions of the thematic material presented in the order in which they appear in the work, showing Sullivan's economy of means and his skill using the same thematic basis while maintaining interest;

Ex.2.12 Overture *di Ballo*, principal themes

(a)

The image shows a musical score for Violin 1, labeled 'Violin 1' and 'dolce'. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two staves. The top staff begins with a rest, followed by a trill (tr) on a dotted quarter note, then a series of eighth notes. The bottom staff begins with a series of eighth notes, followed by a trill (tr) on a dotted quarter note, and then a series of eighth notes. The key signature is one flat (B-flat).

(b)



(c)



(d)



The use of the interval of a major sixth in the first bar of (a) and again in the first bar of (b) is notable and it is followed in both cases by the interval of an octave, rising to the climax of the phrase on a top E flat. Also, the rhythmic variation of the waltz theme (c) to the main theme of the final *tempo di galop* in (d), shows Sullivan dispensing with the dotted crotchets and substituting a rapid scale passage for the wind, accompanied by semiquaver figures for the strings. These are examples of the composer's ingenuity in this work, showing a control and command of his material that he had not demonstrated before.

Schumann's influence is still apparent in Ex.2.12 (a) where Sullivan's theme, with its carefully articulated *staccato* semiquavers, shows its affinity with the two Schumann examples quoted at Ex.2.6. The wind writing somewhat recalls a similar movement, *Un Bal*, from the *Symphonie Fantastique* (1830). The similarity of the overture's title to the movement from the symphony is also suggestive. Berlioz greatly admired Weber and in his book on orchestration, makes frequent references to his music. Weber's influence is certainly detectable in the movement from the *Symphonie*, not least in the shaping of the musical material and frequent use of cross rhythms, features also to be found in Sullivan's work.

While the Overture *In Memoriam* might be said to be quintessentially of the Victorian era, a work guaranteed to strike at contemporary sensibility, as Young puts it, 'the fatally moral-theological' (Young, 1971: 87) and the musical counterpart to such hymn texts as 'Abide with Me' (H.F. Lyte) and 'Lead, kindly Light' (J.H. Newman). Nevertheless, it held its place in the repertoire until the Second World War, not least through Sir Henry Wood, who would include it in concert programmes designed to commemorate the Armistice. It dropped out of sight after the Second World War, only to be revived again in the era of modern recording.

By contrast, the Overture *di Ballo* was the first work by Sullivan to transcend its time. It never entirely dropped out of the repertoire with, in the twentieth century, the advocacy of conductors such as Sir Malcolm Sargent and Wood including it in their programmes. It is also the first secular English work since Pepusch and Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* to have achieved this and has come to be regarded as almost the first concert work in the British tradition of light music which survives to the present time. In terms of Sullivan's own development, there are distinct signs that the various stylistic elements which could be detected in his earlier works were coalescing and becoming more successfully integrated and if thematic development, at least in the classical manner, might have continued to be a stumbling block to the composer, in this instance his ingenuity in adopting a transformation technique as an alternative more than compensates.

It can only be a matter for speculation as to how Sullivan's art would have continued to evolve had he maintained a determination to succeed in the field of symphonic music. The second symphony, referred to earlier, was announced, in the programme for the Crystal Palace in the season 1868-69, as being in preparation, but there is no firm evidence that he seriously attempted to write it (1984: 235). His meeting with Gilbert in November 1869 at the Gallery of Illustration, introduced by their mutual friend Frederic Clay, at a rehearsal of the latter's short dramatic work *Ages Ago* to Gilbert's libretto, was to prove momentous and to alter the course of the rest of his life.

2.3 Sullivan as Editor

As the 1860s progressed, Sullivan was making his way as a composer and conductor and it was inevitable that he should be approached to undertake some editorial work. His most significant assignment was for Boosey & Sons, who, from the middle of the decade, began publishing the Royal Edition of Operas, a series which still survives, although in a radically changed form, since the approach to the editing of music has altered enormously in the last 150 years or so.

In the late eighteenth century Thomas Boosey set up Boosey & Co. as a lending library for the city of London. His grandson, also called Thomas, greatly expanded the musical side of it and began to import scores from Germany and Italy, including works by Rossini, Hummel, Donizetti and Verdi. He founded his own company in 1816 and secured the rights to much of the standard Italian

operatic repertoire, or so he thought (Wallace, 2007: 3). In 1831 Vincenzo Bellini had assigned the copyright of his opera *La Sonnambula* to the publisher Ricordi, who, on coming to England, had assigned it Boosey. Subsequently, a Mr Jeffrey published a Cavatina from the opera without permission from Boosey, and consequently, he raised proceedings against him. The case (*Boosey v Jeffrey 1854*) was finally decided by the House of Lords, who took the view that 'a foreigner, residing out of England, cannot make a valid assignment of a copyright; but if he resided here, subject to the law, and published his work, then the law would protect him' (*The Spectator*, 5 August 1854: 5).

This was a disastrous result for the company, now under the control of the younger Thomas's son, John. He began issuing inexpensive editions of the classical repertoire designed for domestic use and this later became the Royal Edition of Operas. Initially the firm specialised in *opera buffa* and obtained the undisputed English rights to Lecocq's *La Fille de Madame Angot* and Audran's *La Mascotte*. This later broadened into a large variety of works, ranging chronologically from Mozart to Wagner. The series began to be issued from about 1865 and continued, adding new works as they became available. Sullivan appears to have been among the first editors and the table below shows the works for which he was responsible as sole editor and those in which he collaborated with Josiah Pittman (1816—86). It also shows those of his comic operas that seem to bear some evidence that Sullivan was making a deliberate allusion to work that he had previously prepared for publication.

Table 1 (a) and (b) Sullivan's work as an editor of the Royal Edition of Operas and the possible effects on his own music

(a)

Royal Edition of Operas - Works where Sullivan is named as sole editor				
Composer	Opera	Date	Works by Sullivan containing a reference	Date
Beethoven	<i>Fidelio</i>	1803—14	<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	1879
			<i>The Mikado</i>	1885
Bellini	<i>La Sonnambula</i>	1831	<i>Trial By Jury</i>	1875
Flotow	<i>Martha</i>	1847	<i>The Mikado</i>	1885
Gounod	<i>Faust</i>	1859	<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	1879
			<i>Iolanthe</i>	1882
			<i>The Grand Duke</i>	1896
Mozart	<i>Don Giovanni</i>	1787	<i>The Gondoliers</i>	1889
Rossini	<i>Il Barbiere di Siviglia</i>	1816		
Verdi	<i>Il Trovatore</i>	1853	<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	1879

(b)

Royal Edition of Operas - Works where Sullivan is named as joint editor with Josiah Pittman				
Auber	<i>Les Diamants de la Couronne</i>	1841		
	<i>Fra Diavolo</i>	1830		
	<i>Le Domino Noir</i>	1837		
	<i>Masaniello</i>	1828		
Balfe	<i>The Bohemian Girl</i>	1843		
Bellini	<i>Norma</i>	1831		
	<i>I Puritani</i>	1834		
Donizetti	<i>Don Pasquale</i>	1843		
	<i>La Favorita</i>	1840		
	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>	1832	<i>Ruddigore</i>	1887
	<i>Lucrezia Borgia</i>	1833		
Gounod	<i>Mireille</i>	1864	<i>The Mikado</i>	1885
	<i>Le Médecin malgré lui</i>	1858		
Meyerbeer	<i>Dinorah</i>	1859	<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	1879
	<i>Robert le Diable</i>	1831		
	<i>Les Huguenots</i>	1836		
Mozart	<i>Die Zauberflöte</i>	1791	<i>The Gondoliers</i>	1889
	<i>Le Nozze di Figaro</i>	1786	<i>The Gondoliers</i>	1889
Rossini	<i>Guillaume Tell</i>	1829		
	<i>Semiramide</i>	1823		
Verdi	<i>Un Ballo in Maschera</i>	1859		
	<i>Rigoletto</i>	1851		
	<i>La Traviata</i>	1853	<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	1879
Wagner	<i>Lohengrin</i>	1850		
Weber	<i>Der Freischütz</i>	1821	<i>H M S Pinafore</i>	1878

The chief interest in Sullivan's contribution to editing is the perceptible effect that it seems to have had on his own music. The sustained close contact with a work while it was prepared for publication seemed to have allowed Sullivan to absorb it and then draw upon it when writing his own works for the theatre. This work was undertaken from the mid-1860s to the mid-1870s, from the time when Sullivan had composed only two pieces for the stage, *Cox and Box* and *The Contrabandista*, both with libretti by F. C. Burnand. Inevitably there are elements of parody to be found in both, but the first occasion where Sullivan presents a fully recognisable parody, apparently modelling it on a specific number from an opera, is in *Trial by Jury* of 1875, which has part of its origin in the ensemble from Act 1 of Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, 'D'un pensiero e d'un accento'. This was one of the operas that Sullivan prepared for Boosey as editor some six or seven years previously.

Editorial techniques at this period were decidedly elementary. The concept of providing a 'critical edition' of a work with scrupulous comparisons between differing versions, the composer's autograph, where extant, and early printed versions, was unknown. In the nineteenth century the editor's task was to provide a clear version of the musical text with a serviceable keyboard reduction of the orchestral accompaniment for use by a *repetiteur*. In the Royal Edition Boosey provided the libretto in Italian with a simultaneous translation into English, regardless of what the original language may have been. This reflects the custom of the time of giving all works in the grand opera genre in Italian, as performed at what was then called the Royal Italian Opera at Covent Garden.

There is no evidence that Sullivan brought any originality or innovation to the task of editing these operatic scores; at this point in his career it was one of the many tasks to which he had to turn his hand to make a living and he would adhere to the customs of the period in his approach. The editing of operatic works poses certain problems, since the source materials may be associated with a particular performance, the circumstances of which may have a bearing on their nature and any assessment of them. Further, opera is the most public and collaborative of genres and the final form of the work may be determined by contributions from singers, producers, directors, the opera company and others and these may well be faithfully reflected in the source materials. The editor must arrive at a view of how the various versions of the work came into being and evaluate them. While it may be tempting to ignore everything except the composer's text, this would be to disregard the fundamental communal nature of opera (Grier, 1996: 206).

In fact, nineteenth-century editions of opera scores (i.e. vocal scores) tended to be ahistorical and even the fact that the original language of the libretto was not Italian would not be stated. At this period an editor would, in an instance where more than one reading of a passage was possible, choose the one that he found most convincing with 'obvious errors...corrected silently'. As Grier says, 'obvious to whom? And corrected in what way?' (Grier, 1996: 8) Further, we are now accustomed to editors giving their reasons for preferring a reading of a passage which allows the user of the score to arrive at his own decision, being in possession of all the relevant facts and exercising his own judgment. The scores edited by Sullivan are strikingly impersonal with no individual contribution to indicate the basis for any of the decisions he may have made about the work during its preparation.

From today's standpoint, Boosey's nineteenth-century vocal scores are certainly useable by an accompanist or *repetiteur*, although the absence of the original text in the correct language could cause difficulties and in certain other respects they need to be approached with caution. As was and remained the custom in vocal scores, not least in those of Sullivan's own choral and theatre works, the keyboard accompaniments were usually no more than workmanlike. This was mostly because they were not intended for performance, but for rehearsal, the employment of an orchestra (where appropriate) for the ultimate realisation of the work being assumed. In Sullivan's case this was to lead to some misconceptions of the worth of some of his music, since it was often assessed based on the available vocal score with its barely-adequate keyboard reduction and stripped of its orchestral dress. It is intended to show in this study that sonority is an essential component of Sullivan's musical style and that his works cannot be fully appreciated without it and this is discussed in detail in the opening section of Chapter 3.

Sullivan rarely used direct quotation when making a reference to a work by another composer; the exception being his allusion to the G minor fugue of Bach (BWV 542) in the Mikado's song, to

complement the words, 'Bach interwoven with Spohr and Beethoven'. The reference is often subtler, such as the Italianate shape of the vocal lines in the ensemble from *Trial by Jury* mentioned above. Alternatively, Sullivan may supply a variant of another composer's phrase, such as in *Iolanthe*, where an ensemble within the Act 1 finale shows a close affinity with Verdi's main theme from the Overture to *La Forza del Destino* (1862). One striking feature is the greater number of apparent references or allusions in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Others are more obviously pointed, such as the portrayal of the character Mad Margaret in *Ruddigore*. Sullivan deliberately reminds us of Lucia in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and uses a solo flute in a way recalls the manner of the older composer.⁹ It is also notable that, of the seven operas Sullivan worked on as sole editor, he alludes to all of them save *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Conversely, of those twenty-five works for which he was joint editor, he appears to refer only to six of them in his own music. There is no information as to how the work was divided up between the two editors, but the difference is striking.

The most recent opera on which Sullivan worked alone was Gounod's *Faust* (1859). Unlike some of the others, he would have known it very well from his time as organist at Covent Garden, as it is one of the operas where, in the Church Scene, the organ part is mandatory. While on occasion Sullivan may adopt a model from a certain work, perhaps because *Faust* is Gounod's best-known work for the stage, such references that are to be found tend to be brief and comparatively few, although apposite where present.

One occurs in the chorus of Peers from Act 1 of *Iolanthe* (1882). This is a sustained and substantial choral march for the male chorus largely in four parts, with a lyrical trio section forming an effective contrast to the brash martial style of the outer sections with their vocal imitations of brass and percussion ('Tantantara! Tzing! Boom!'). Here Sullivan seems deliberately to recall the middle section of the Soldiers' Chorus from *Faust*. The similarity concerns the actual notes, where in Gounod's example the C is the 5th of the chord, but in Sullivan's it is the third degree of the chord; the expressive effect, however, is quite different. At this point in his chorus Gounod modulates to F major, the dominant of his main key of B flat, an entirely orthodox procedure. Sullivan's tonic key is E flat major, but for his central section he prefers to move to the subdominant, A flat major. In both cases the first tenor part begins on C, with each composer using a rocking semitone figure. Sullivan's texture is lighter, being a single line, but moving to two-part harmony. The vocal line is less florid and Sullivan reserves four-part writing for the outer sections. Gounod maintains a three or four-part texture within the middle section, thus reducing the impact of the contrast. When recalling Gounod's style, Sullivan tended to simplify the writing for greater clarity.

Below is the beginning of the middle section of Gounod's chorus, followed by that of Sullivan's.

⁹ This is as much Gilbert's reference as Sullivan's, since he began his career writing burlesques of early and mid-nineteenth-century Italian operas.

Ex.2.13

(a) Gounod, *Faust*, Trio from The Soldiers' Chorus, Act 4, from bar 1

Vers nos fo - yers Ha - tons le

pas, on nous at - tend, la paix est fai - te,

(b) *Iolanthe*, Trio from The Peers' Chorus, Act 1, from bar 1

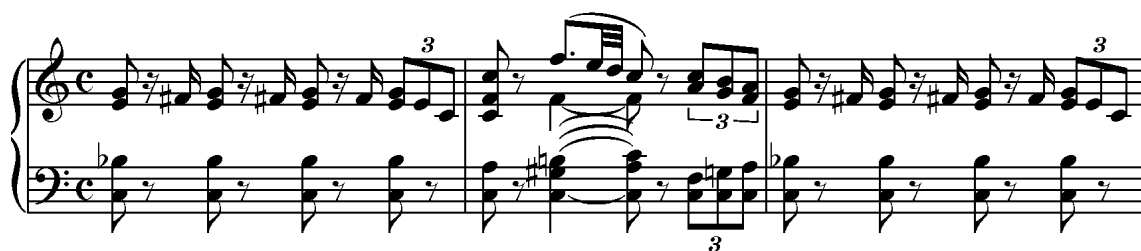
p We are peers of high - est sta - tion,

In his last collaboration with Gilbert, *The Grand Duke* (1896), Sullivan returned to Gounod's Soldiers' Chorus. A short passage occurs in both the Overture to Sullivan's work and as a bridge passage between recitatives late in the second act, (No.24 in the vocal score). It is derived from part of Gounod's introduction and the postlude to his Chorus, but again, Sullivan's modifications are worth noticing. He streamlines Gounod's melodic line and there is a characteristic use of the semitone interval, which has already been noted, which is harmonised by a dominant seventh chord followed by a chord of the dominant in second inversion. However, Sullivan adds a touch of harmonic colour by using a chord containing both a major seventh and a sharpened fifth on the second beat of the second bar of the example, combined with a rhythmic flourish of a dotted figure. This effectively breaks the pattern and avoids rhythmic monotony, something that Gounod does not quite achieve. The extract from Gounod's work is given below followed by Sullivan's.

Ex.2.14

(a) Gounod, *Faust*, fragment from the introduction and postlude to The Soldiers' Chorus

(b) *The Grand Duke*, fragment from the Overture and Act 2



In cases such as these Sullivan took great pains to ensure that any references or allusions were carefully integrated into his structure. He did this by making small, but subtle changes in the rhythms and harmony to avoid the least suspicion of incongruity. This was born of a natural desire for stylistic consistency combined with a reliance on his memory.

There seems to be little doubt that Sullivan's approach was to adopt a certain style if the comic opera seemed to demand it and this would seem to be a deliberate policy on his part. The most striking instance being in *The Gondoliers* where Sullivan uses an Italian musical manner throughout by the employment of the appropriate dance forms, such as the Cachucha in Act 2 and a Tarantella within the Finale to Act 1. However, as the story concerns men and women of the working class, the *gondolieri* and *contadine*, Sullivan seems to have regarded the Italian *operatic* style as being inappropriate, since it tended to be associated with the nobility. Thus, when he writes a 'perplexity ensemble' in the second act ('In a contemplative fashion'), another example of which is found in *Trial by Jury* and is referred to earlier, where each character explains the position in which the plot so far has placed him or her, there are no Italianate stylistic features to be found in the vocal writing, despite the Venetian setting.

Of those works that were edited by Sullivan with Josiah Pittman, Gounod's *Mireille* contains an example of how Sullivan's contact with a work influenced his own music, sometimes, as in this case, many years later. As had happened with Gounod's *Faust*, *Mireille* had first been performed in Italian at Her Majesty's Theatre, Haymarket under the title *Mirella* on 5 July 1864 and was the most recent work that Sullivan and Pittman edited jointly. It is not certain that Sullivan saw the opera, although he may have had the opportunity to do so.

When, some twenty years later, Sullivan was working on *The Mikado*, he seems to have recalled the Shepherd's Song from Act 4 of *Mireille* ('Le jour se lève') when writing the song for Yum-Yum, which is placed near the beginning of the second act, 'The sun, whose rays are all ablaze'. When discussing this, Hughes writes with genuine enthusiasm about Sullivan's abilities and describes it as,

a *locus classicus* of Sullivan's skill in combining melodic charm with rhythmic originality; it is no less remarkable for its harmonic symmetry and subtlety. Even the first modulation to

the dominant sounds different from usual; the second stanza starts in the dominant minor (of all unexpected keys) and then *closes*, [Hughes' emphasis] for practical purposes, on the supertonic minor. The transitions are all splendidly handled; an unhurried succession of muted string chords (crotchets in slow 3/4) forms the background, while an oboe touches up one of the crucial modulations. In the refrain (to which on the second time round flute and clarinet add their unobtrusive decoration) there is an effective and unusually emphatic modulation to the subdominant, and the cadence—where Sullivan so often lets us down—is particularly attractive...the qualities which go to make up a work of art defy analysis; every bar of this song shows the hand of a talented craftsman, but it only could have been conceived by a true artist. It is in fact a little gem. (1960: 57)

It is regrettable that, in one of the few instances where Hughes writes with real warmth and appreciation of Sullivan's abilities, he seems to overlook the fact that Sullivan has adopted a model for this song. There are striking similarities; like Sullivan, in 'Le jour se lève' Gounod uses slow-moving string chords, but in 4/4 rather than in triple time and incorporates decorative wind figures, which in this case, seems to answer for the shepherd's pipe. Both songs are in the key of G major, and both include a move to the supertonic minor, noted by Hughes above and to be found at bar 14 of Gounod's example, following a modulation to the dominant. Gounod later refers briefly to the mediant major (B major), which is also the dominant of the relative minor (E minor) and this is followed by a return to the tonic that shows a rather less smooth technique than Sullivan's own. The similarity in the word setting should also be noted; both treat the words syllabically in semiquavers and the use of melisma is avoided. The first few notes of each are almost identical and the distinct melodic similarity is sustained throughout.

There is a degree of refinement in Sullivan's example that seems to be lacking in Gounod, although, in fairness, it should be noted that Gounod is writing, if somewhat self-consciously, in a naïve folk-like idiom which is part of his characterisation of the shepherd-boy. This is a complete contrast to the knowing, yet artless egoism of Yum-Yum's song. The same stylistic means are here used to achieve a very different expressive effect, since the character of Yum-Yum and Gounod's shepherd-boy are poles apart. Below are bars 11 to 16 of Gounod's song with, for comparison, bars 3 to 6 of Sullivan's example.

Ex.2.14 Gounod, 'Le Jour se lève' from Act 4 of *Mireille*, from bar 11

Andante

Que nul - le bris - se ne sou - le - ve S'en flamme et luit Et dans les airs l'ois - eau s'en -

fuit Et moi, tout seul a - vec mes che - vres La soif aux le - vres

Ex.2.15 Sullivan, 'The sun whose rays are all ablaze' from *The Mikado*, Act 2, bars 3 to 6

Yum-Yum

The sun, whose rays Are all a - blaze with e - ver - li - ving glo - ry

orchestral strings

Does not de - ny His ma - jes - ty - He scorns to tell a sto - ry

As already noted, the influence of Mendelssohn's music had been a constant factor in Sullivan's development as a composer. Given his standing in England at this time, this is hardly surprising. During this period a press notice of one of Sullivan's student compositions suggested that the composer's ability to reproduce Mendelssohn's style with such apparent authenticity precluded the writer from offering an opinion on whether he would be likely to succeed under more independent conditions (see 2.1 above.)

The *Lieder ohne Worte* were hugely popular among amateur pianists, since the pieces combined brevity and refinement of expression with technical demands that were not overly taxing. Many

publishers produced editions of them to exploit this domestic market. Sometime before 1874, (Jacobs, 1984: 446) his publisher Cramer approached Sullivan to provide an edition. For him this was most likely another of the activities that economic necessity obliged him to undertake at this period, although no doubt more agreeable than some, such as teaching. His approach would most likely be like the one he adopted when editing vocal scores for Boosey; to provide a serviceable version of the text with the minimum of editorial additions or annotations. One passage of harmonic interest seems to have stayed with Sullivan to be reproduced many years later in the second act of *Ruddigore*. It occurs in Book 1, No.2 of Op 19 at bars 30 to 37, as follows:

Ex.2.16 Mendelssohn, *Lieder ohne Worte*, Op 19, Book 1 No.2 from bar 30



In the second act of *Ruddigore*, Robin Oakapple (Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd) is confronted by the spectres of his ancestors who demand that he should assume the burden of the family curse, which is that he must commit one crime every day. They are led by Sir Roderic Murgatroyd, whom Robin asks to identify himself and he responds thus:

Ex.2.17 *Ruddigore*, Act 2, No.4 from bar 88

Grave maestoso (a tempo) Sir Roderic

I am the spec-tre of the late Sir Rod - eric

Mur - ga - troyd, Who comes to warn thee that thy fate Thou canst not now a - void.

Sullivan's extract is pitched a semitone lower than Mendelssohn's and the compound time is 6/8 rather than 3/8. Mendelssohn maintains an harmonic rhythm of one harmony per bar, changing the position of the implied dominant chord from second inversion to root position, while superimposing the flattened supertonic above it in the second bar of the extract and in the next bar changing the harmony below it. Sullivan, to increase the atmosphere of menace he wishes to

create, uses a pedal point, thus reinforcing the dissonances, the tension only being released in the last bar of the example.

It should also be noted that the accent on the first beat of the fourth bar in the passage from Mendelssohn corresponds with the accent in the passage from *Ruddigore* on the word 'Murgatroyd'. Naturally, the note values have been changed to accommodate the verbal accentuation, but it is of interest that the accent appears in the same part of the phrase. Both passages are designed to increase the emotional tension by the introduction of accented dissonances, but the difference is one of degree, since Sullivan is working towards a significant dramatic climax that is Sir Roderic's song, 'When the night wind howls'. In Mendelssohn's piano piece there is a brief *forte* passage of two bars that leads to a repetition of the opening material, very slightly varied.

This is an area of Sullivan's activities that has received very little attention, being mentioned only in passing by Hughes (1960: 128) and Young (1971: 60, 66). However, it is Hughes who recognises the potential significance of Sullivan's 'familiarity with the standard operatic repertory of his day' (1960: 128) for his own music, to which he attributes some of Sullivan's habits in the construction of melody, although he makes no distinction between the works that Sullivan edited jointly with Pittman and those for which he was sole editor. In the examples quoted above, it is debatable how deliberate Sullivan's references may have been, given his tendency to work under pressure. In the case of the possible allusion in the Peers' Chorus in *Iolanthe* to the Soldiers' Chorus from Gounod's *Faust*, it is likely that this was an intentional piece of musical humour on Sullivan's part and the same may be said of the passage in *The Grand Duke* from the same source.

The similarity between 'Le jour se lève' from *Mireille* and 'The sun whose rays' from Act 2 of *The Mikado* is in a rather different category; if granted that the allusion is intentional, and the number of resemblances would seem to rule out an unconscious one, then the use of Gounod's song as a model may well have been suggested partly by the verbal rhythm of the original as well as a realisation on Sullivan's part that Gounod's exercise in a naïve folk-music style could effectively be inverted to provide an ironic accompaniment to the faux-naïve sentiments of Gilbert's words. The effect is a complete success. The artless simplicity of the vocal line contrasts with the sentiment of the words, 'I mean to rule the earth as he the sky, We really know our worth, the sun and I' yet we do not lose sympathy for the character, but are amused by Yum-Yum's egoism, not repelled. This is a very sophisticated and subtle piece of musical characterisation on Sullivan's part, because the effect does not depend on the ability to recognise the allusion to Gounod; Sullivan's music makes the point on its own terms and can be understood accordingly. An awareness of his debt to Gounod simply makes clear the means he employed to achieve his end.

Sullivan only carried out editorial work for a few years at the end of the 1860s and beginning of the 1870s. However, because most of this work was concerned with opera, the impression it made on Sullivan was probably very deep. It must be recognised that there is an element of speculation as to the extent to which his own music was influenced by it, but at a time when music could only be experienced by attending a performance or performing it oneself in the form of an arrangement for piano solo or duet, or simply reading the score, as opposed to having access to a recording, it is not unreasonable to draw certain conclusions from such evidence as may be available.

2.4 The Influence of the Theatre

Given that Sullivan is remembered mainly for his works for the musical stage, it follows that the influence of the theatre is an important consideration in his musical development. His first genuine public success was his incidental music to *The Tempest* and even one of his lost student works is known to have been an Overture to Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*. For the first three years of Arthur's life, his father, Thomas, worked as a clarinettist in the Surrey Theatre for the salary of one guinea per week, which he supplemented by teaching and music copying, until economic necessity required him to return to the Royal Military College (Sandhurst) as sergeant bandmaster in April 1845. Clearly his connection with the theatre would have had no direct influence on the infant Sullivan, except perhaps that it is evident that he was being raised in a household where the theatre, as a working environment, was regarded as entirely acceptable. This was an attitude which could not be taken for granted at this period where there was considerable hostility to it on moral grounds, at least among certain sections of the more religiously-inclined middle classes, as being the haunt of sexually predatory men and women of easy virtue.

It is arguable that Sullivan's earliest theatrical experiences were as a chorister in the Chapel Royal. The Chapel Royal services, with their potent combination of both royal and ecclesiastical ceremonial, would contain the same elements of both the serious and fantastic found in a theatrical performance, certainly as experienced by an impressionable child like Sullivan, born into humble circumstances. Jacobs makes the point that at this period in the Anglican church, what was known as the 'high church' movement had a strong wish to restore the English church to her 'Catholic' inheritance (Jacobs, 1984: 9). This involved a marked change of emphasis and matters such as liturgy, ritual and robing assumed a far greater importance than previously, when the sermon occupied the central position in the service; some aspects of this change are discussed in 1.3. Young tells us in some detail of the environment in which the young Sullivan found himself:

There were many events in the life of the royal family which required the seal of divine authority, and the presence of the Chapel Royal choristers. Christenings, confirmations, weddings and funerals occurred with some regularity and were often held in the chapel of

Buckingham Palace...For an impressionable boy it was a memorable introduction to the fantasy of royal ceremonial (1971: 7).

TABLE 2 – Sullivan’s Theatre Music

Incidental Music	Text	Date	Comic Opera	Text	Date
<i>The Tempest</i>	Shakespeare	1861	<i>The Zoo</i>	B. Rowe	1875
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	Shakespeare	1871	<i>The Sorcerer</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1877
<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Shakespeare	1874	<i>HMS Pinafore</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1878
<i>Henry VIII</i>	Shakespeare	1877	<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1879
<i>Macbeth</i>	Shakespeare	1888	<i>Patience</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1881
<i>The Foresters</i>	Tennyson	1892	<i>Iolanthe</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1882
<i>King Arthur</i>	Comyns Carr	1895	<i>Princess Ida</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1884
Opera	Text	Date	<i>The Mikado</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1885
<i>The Sapphire Necklace</i>	H. F. Chorley	1867	<i>Ruddigore</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1887
<i>Ivanhoe</i>	J. Sturgis	1891	<i>The Yeomen of the Guard</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1888
Ballet	Choreography	Date	<i>The Gondoliers</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1889
<i>L’île enchantée</i>	H. Desplaces	1864	<i>Haddon Hall</i>	S. Grundy	1892
<i>Victoria and Merrie England</i>	C. Coppi	1897	<i>Utopia Limited</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1893
Comic Opera	Text	Date	<i>The Chieftain</i>	F. C. Burnand	1894
<i>Cox and Box</i>	F. C. Burnand	1866	<i>The Grand Duke</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1896
<i>The Contrabandista</i>	F. C. Burnand	1867	<i>The Beauty Stone</i>	A. W. Pinero	1898
<i>Thespis</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1871	<i>The Rose of Persia</i>	B. Hood	1899
<i>Trial by Jury</i>	W. S. Gilbert	1875	<i>The Emerald Isle</i>	B. Hood	1901

Sullivan’s work for the theatre (see Table 2 above) contains his most significant music, at least in terms of what is known of his output over a century after his death. The comic operas are the best known, but he worked in almost every current theatrical genre. Not only was the theatre where Sullivan did most of his professional work, but it was also for him a significant place of recreation. In his diary, (housed in the Beinecke and Pierpont Morgan Libraries (Jacobs, 1984: 130–131)) which runs from 1879 until a few weeks before his death in 1900, there are approximately 200 entries that refer to the various performances of works Sullivan attended as a member of the audience. Drama is included as well as opera and comic opera. Some, such as Gounod’s *Faust* or *Carmen* by Bizet, are mentioned several times and he records attending performances of Bizet’s opera twice in 1882 (January and March), and again in April 1887 and July 1892, although the first reference in his diary makes it clear that the work was already familiar to him. This was one that seems to have impressed Sullivan simply as a listener; it was not an opera he would ever conduct, nor did he prepare the score for publication as an editor. It is the most recent example of the genre to which he seems to refer in his own music, having been performed first in London at His Majesty’s Theatre in 1878 with the Scottish tenor Durward Lely as Don Jose, who was later to undertake a significant number of roles in Gilbert and Sullivan’s joint works at the Savoy Theatre in the following decade.

The comic opera that Sullivan composed in 1883 was *Princess Ida* to a libretto adapted by Gilbert from one of his earlier blank verse plays. This had been designed by Gilbert to be a more or less respectful parody of Tennyson’s *The Princess*. This work stands somewhat apart from the others. It is the only one by the collaborators in three acts (originally a prologue and two acts) and the only one of the comic operas where Gilbert uses blank verse, retained from the play. The second act contains a sequence of ensembles that includes a Quintet. Like Bizet’s example in Act 2 of *Carmen*,

it is in the key of D flat major and uses compound time. Rhythmically Bizet's ensemble is more sophisticated than Sullivan's with a theme in dotted quavers superimposed in counterpoint above the main theme where the underlying 3/8 metre is emphasised. However, the shape of each of the musical ideas has something in common together with a marked driving momentum. Here is Bizet's main theme stated by the five voices in octaves.

Ex.2.18 Bizet, *Carmen*, Quintet from Act 2, main theme

Voices in octaves



Il est tou-jours bon, sur ma foi, D'a-voir les fem-mes a-vec soi.

This may be compared to the refrain of Sullivan's example below.

Ex.2.19 *Princess Ida*, Quintet from Act 2, refrain from bar 1

Psyche

Then jump for joy and gai - ly bound, The truth_ is found, the

Melissa

Then jump for joy and gai - ly bound, The truth is found, the

Cyril

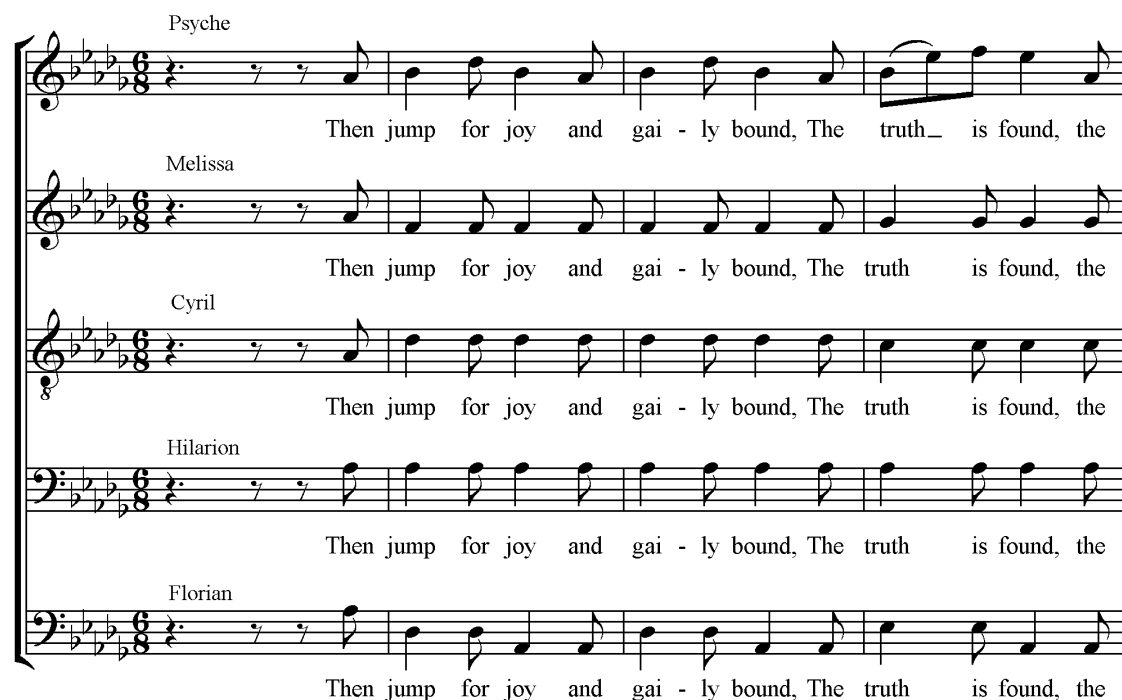
Then jump for joy and gai - ly bound, The truth is found, the

Hilarion

Then jump for joy and gai - ly bound, The truth is found, the

Florian

Then jump for joy and gai - ly bound, The truth is found, the



truth is found. Set bells a-ring-ing thro' the air Ring here and there and ev - 'ry -where

truth is found. Set bells a-ring-ing thro' the air Ring here and there and ev - 'ry -where

truth is found. Set bells a-ring-ing thro' the air Ring here and there and ev - 'ry -where

truth is found. Set bells a-ring-ing thro' the air Ring here and there and ev - 'ry -where

truth is found. Set bells a-ring-ing thro' the air Ring here and there and ev - 'ry -where

The similarity of the rhythm at the words 'the truth is found' with that at the words 'D'avoir les femmes avec soi' as well as the shape of the phrase is notable, although Sullivan uses simple repetition as opposed to Bizet's use of sequence. In terms of metre, the two ensembles are very similar and below there is a comparison with a later example found in the second act of *The Gondoliers*. Bizet's ensemble provides a different function in what is a musical drama that ultimately ends in tragedy. The basic material is varied to accommodate the stage action designed to persuade Carmen to join in the conspiracy. In musical terms this means several modulations and variations of tempo, particularly within the central section. In both of Sullivan's comic operas the ensembles are simply comments by the characters on the situation in which they find themselves; 'the truth is found' in *Princess Ida* and 'moralists all, how can you call marriage a state of unity?' in *The Gondoliers*. They are correspondingly smaller in scale and beyond the metrical and melodic similarities noted above, the comparison should not be pressed too far, since the musico-dramatic aims in each case are quite different.

Early in its performance history *Carmen* (first performed at the Paris Opéra-Comique, 3 March 1875) was revised so that it accorded with the current grand opera conventions of the time. For a production at the Vienna Court Opera in October 1875, the spoken dialogue was replaced by recitatives composed by Bizet's friend Ernest Guiraud (1837-92), who also assembled the two orchestral suites. Therefore, the opera came to be regarded as a popular example of the grand opera genre, comparable to a work such as Verdi's *La Traviata* (1853), with which, in its treatment of the subject matter, it has a certain amount in common. However, as originally designed by Bizet and his collaborators, Meilhac and Halévy, it was a true *opéra comique* that was designed to move at a more rapid pace than Guiraud's rather cumbersome recitatives would allow. In other words,

both *Princess Ida* and *Carmen* belonged to the same world and Sullivan's imitation, whether or not intentional, was born of sincere admiration rather than any desire to write a parody.

When Sullivan came to write *The Gondoliers* in 1889, an opera set in Italy, but concerned with Spanish characters, the Duke and Duchess of Plaza Toro, there are, perhaps inevitably, some references to *Carmen* to be found. A brief example occurs in the first scene that consists of almost twenty minutes of music uninterrupted by dialogue and in terms of musical structure, if in no other respect, it was the partnership's closest approach to grand opera. The two male principals sing as shown below in Ex.2.20.

This may be compared to the following brief passage from Act 2 of *Carmen*, sung by El Remendado and El Dancairo to Zuniga, the Captain at Ex.2.21. The two-part writing is in sixths rather than mostly in thirds. However, the shape of the phrase is similar and includes stepwise movement with a comparable use made of chromatic unaccented passing notes, concluding with rather more of a dying fall on the word 'declare', with pairs of descending slurred quavers as opposed to Bizet's simple chromatic ascent. Gilbert had intended this passage as recitative, but Sullivan's approach is unexpected. Hughes comments on it that, 'we have this metrical transformation, which is ingenious but hardly gives the rhymes and metre a fair chance' (1960: 31).

Ex.2.20 *The Gondoliers*, Act 1, first scene from bar 484

Marco

Giuseppe

We

As all are young and fair, And a - mia - ble be - sides, We

real-ly do not care A pref' rence to de - clare. A bi - as to dis-close would be in -

real-ly do not care A pref' rence to de - clare.

Ex.2.21 Bizet, *Carmen*, Act 2, passage leading to the Quintet

$\text{♩} = 100$ El Remendado

Mon cher mon sieur! Mon cher mon sieur! Nous al-lons,

El Dancaire

Mon cher mon-sieur! Mon cher mon-sieur! Nous al-lons,

s'il vous plait, quit - ter cet - te de - meu - re;

s'il vous plait, quit - ter cet - te de - meu - re;

Towards the end of the second act of *The Gondoliers* there is an ensemble for the two couples with Casilda, the daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Plaza Toro, expressing their perplexity at their situation, where one of the men is said to be a prince who had been married in infancy to Casilda, but, even at this late stage in the opera, it is still not known which. The Quintet, likes its predecessor of five years before, is in the key of D flat major and uses compound time. (In his score for the ballet *Pineapple Poll* (1951), based on Sullivan's music, drawn mostly from the comic operas and a scenario based on some of Gilbert's *Bab Ballads*, Charles Mackerras makes clear the close relationship between the two ensembles by conflating them.) Here the debt to Bizet is more obvious and its integration into the structure is less accomplished, since it forms the beginning of what is to be the finale to the second act. The shapes of the musical material have a closer resemblance to Bizet's original than the earlier example. The combination of an iambic metre and compound time makes the similarity almost inevitable, as shown below. (Sullivan's treatment of the word 'marriage' in the excerpt is as given in the vocal score.)

Here is a case un-pre-ced-ent-ed (9 syllables)
 Here are a king and queen ill-starred, (8 syllables)

Il est tou-jours bon, sur ma foi, (8 syllables)
 D'av-oir les fem-mes a-vec soi (8 syllables)

Ex.2.22 Sullivan, *The Gondoliers*, Finale to Act 2 from bar 5

Casilda
Here is a case un - pre - ced - ent - ed! Here are a King and Queen ill- starr'd!

Gianetta
Here is a case un - pre - ced - ent - ed! Here are a King and Queen ill- starr'd!

Tessa
Here is a case un - pre - ced - ent - ed! Here are a King and Queen ill- starr'd!

Marco
Here is a case un - pre - ced - ent - ed! Here are a King and Queen ill- starr'd!

Giuseppe
Here is a case un - pre - ced - ent - ed! Here are a King and Queen ill- starr'd!

Ev - er since marriage was first in - ven - ted Ne - ver was known a case so hard!

Ev - er since marriage was first in - ven - ted Ne - ver was known a case so hard!

Ev - er since marriage was first in - ven - ted Ne - ver was known a case so hard!

Ev - er since marriage was first in - ven - ted Ne - ver was known a case so hard!

Ev - er since marriage was first in - ven - ted Ne - ver was known a case so hard!

Ev - er since marriage was first in - ven - ted Ne - ver was known a case so hard!

There is also a striking similarity between *Princess Ida* and Rossini's *Le comte Ory* (1828) in terms of plot where, in the second act of both works, men are disguised as women to gain entry to a castle. In Rossini's opera they are female pilgrims and in *Princess Ida* they are aspiring undergraduates. Both also include a drinking scene. Sullivan's concession to this similarity appears to be confined to a greater use of dotted rhythms, something of a Rossinian characteristic, but there appears to be no actual thematic similarity. Like *Carmen*, this seems to be a work that Sullivan knew, possibly from the score, but there is no record in his diary of his having attended a performance of it. It was

performed infrequently and was first given in London at the King's Theatre on 28 February 1829, but subsequent performances were rare.

As far as can be determined, there is only one other instance of Sullivan consciously imitating Rossini's style, again without actual quotation, and that is to be found in the second act of *The Pirates of Penzance*. It is in the form of a parody of the grand operatic 'revenge ensemble', sung by the Pirate King, Ruth and Frederic, when it has become apparent that Major-General Stanley has attempted to deceive them by claiming (falsely) to be an orphan. The key is B minor, but the middle section is in the tonic major beginning thus:

Ex.2.23 *The Pirates of Penzance*, Trio in Act 2, middle section from bar 1

Ruth
To- night he dies! They will wel-ter in sor - row,

Frederic
His girls likewise,

Pirate King
Yes, or ear-ly to - mor - ow

mf
p

The resemblance to Rossini becomes even more apparent when this passage is repeated giving the theme previously sung by the voices to the piccolo and flute, placing the voices in *mezza voce*.

Ex.2.24 *The Pirates of Penzance*, Trio in Act 2, middle section from bar 10

Ruth *p*
To - night he dies! yes, or ear-ly to - mor - ow His girls like- wise, they will wel-ter in

Frederic *p*
To - night he dies! yes, or ear-ly to - mor - ow His girls like- wise, they will wel-ter in

Pirate King *p*
To - night he dies! yes, or ear-ly to - mor - ow His girls like- wise, they will wel-ter in

pp

There are some notable similarities with the following passage taken from the Overture to *The Thieving Magpie* (1817). Here Rossini uses triplets within a simple time rhythmic structure as opposed to Sullivan's triple compound time. Again, there is a resemblance between the melodic shapes used by both composers, the placing of appoggiaturas on strong accents and triplets using semitones, in Rossini's case in thirds for the wind. This is another instance of Sullivan evoking the sound-world of another composer, including a more than passable imitation of his scoring and habits of melody-writing, without actual thematic allusion.

Ex.2.25 Rossini, Overture *The Thieving Magpie*, second subject

Perhaps one of the most striking and extended examples of this singular skill is to be found in the opening chorus of *Iolanthe*, set in a land of fairies, where the atmosphere of Mendelssohn's music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is again subtly suggested without recourse to direct quotation. In the case of the Trio discussed above, this is a comparatively brief ensemble and the stylistic reference in the outer (minor) sections is redolent of the more melodramatic examples of the Italian opera genre, but here applied to a ridiculous situation.

In the last section of the finale to the second act of *Princess Ida* we encounter the closest stylistic resemblance to Rossini. Setting aside the similarities in plot and *mise en scène* to *Le comte Ory* which have been noted above, the concluding section of the finale to the second act forms a fitting climax, both dramatically and musically with the vocal writing for the soprano soloist being both exposed and virtuosic. The beginning of the section is given at Ex.2.32. Sullivan's use of dotted rhythms here was for him unusual, but not unique. The conclusion of the finale to the first act of *Iolanthe* is in the form of march with a central trio section which stylistically comes close to imitating Sousa; the use of rests in the melodic line being remarkably similar when the two are compared.

Ex.2.26 Sousa, March *The Stars and Stripes Forever* from bar 13

Bar 13

p *leggiero* *f*

5

1. 2.

ff

Ex.2.27 *Iolanthe*, final ensemble of the Finale to Act 1 from bar 2

* * * * *

With Streph - on for your foe, no doubt, A fear - ful pros - pect

op - ens out! And who shall say What ev - ils may Re - sult in con - seq - uence!

Here Sullivan uses dotted rhythms as part of the military character of the music, as he also does in the March and Chorus of *Peers* earlier in the act, but with a vital difference; as Meinhard Saremba says of this passage, 'The march tune that concludes the finale functions as an antithesis to the earlier *maestoso* march of the peers. As the *allegro marziale* indicates, the music reveals the fairies' perspective on the invaders—the conflict reaches the culmination of the crisis' (Companion, 2009: 51–2).

He later points out that the March of the *Peers* is not merely ceremonial in character, but (from the fairies' point of view) a procession of unwelcome intruders. Sullivan expresses this aspect in the menacing *crescendo* before the conclusion of the chorus. In addition, the five-note figure at the

beginning of the final section (*) is a variant of the opening of the first chorus of Act 1 as shown in Ex.2.29, further demonstrating the point that Saremba makes above, that the Peers are being forced to view events from the fairies' perspective.

Ex.2.28 *Iolanthe* solo from the opening chorus

Allegretto
Solo. Celia

We are dain - ty lit - tle fai - ries, E - ver sing - ing, e - ver danc - ing

Here Sullivan adopts a form of the thematic transformation technique which he used in the Overture *di Ballo*, as well as apparently drawing on music from Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, the vocal score for which he prepared with Pittman for Boosey. As at the end of the first act of *Iolanthe*, ('With Strephon for your foe, no doubt, a fearful prospect opens out'), the conclusion of the first act of Verdi's opera is concerned with a baleful prophecy, but in this case, of assassination. This is Ricardo's reaction, which is laughingly to dismiss it. The theme shares both melodic and rhythmic characteristics with Sullivan's concluding march theme; even the placing of the group of quavers within the phrase is not dissimilar.

Ex.2.29 Verdi, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, conclusion of Act 1

Andante mosso quasi allegretto

pp è scher - zo, od è fol - li - a si - fat - ta pro - fi - zi - a, è scher - zo, od è fol - li - a si - fa - ta pro - fe - zi - a;

The extended passage in the second act of *The Pirates of Penzance* ('When the foeman bears his steel') also uses dotted rhythms and is another instance of Sullivan's debt to Verdi, in this case *Il Trovatore* (1853) and specifically the Soldiers' Chorus from the second act.

In *Princess Ida* the effect is quite different and is not primarily concerned with the military. It may be compared to the passage follows it from late in the second act of Rossini's opera, where the dotted rhythms are used, but in a different dramatic situation.

Ex.2.30 Rossini *Le comte Ory*, conclusion of Act 2

Allegro

Ce - le - bria - mo di cor il vino al - la fol -
lia, al genio al gen - nio dell' a - mor____ dell' a - mor,

The character of the Princess is shown here as strong and unyielding, but inappropriately given the events as they have occurred. As in the middle section of the Trio from *The Pirates of Penzance* (Ex. 2.4.7), Sullivan here uses the chorus in *mezzo voce*, to comment on the Princess's intransigence, ('Oh yield at once, 'twere better so'), when the passage quoted below is repeated; this is a most effective contrast to the vocally wide-ranging writing for the solo soprano which culminates in a sustained top B flat below which the chorus sing their version of the passage quoted below.

Ex.2.31 Princess *Ida*, conclusion of the Finale to Act 2

Allegro Marziale

Princess: To yield at once to such a foe With shame were rife;____
So quick! a-way with him, al - tho' He sav'd my life!

Sullivan is here testing the limits of the comic opera genre by including technical demands in his music that would stretch the vocal resources of most sopranos working outside an opera house. Another instance is to be found in the writing for Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, specifically 'Poor wand'ring one' in the first act, which not only adopts Gounod's *Valse-arriette* manner, but also quotes from the cadenza of 'Ah fors lui' from Verdi's *La Traviata*, which was known, in one of the English versions of this period, under the title 'The Wanderer' or alternatively, 'The Castaway'. This was designed to reinforce the satire, but there were distinct limits to the extent to which this could be done without mimicking the attendant technical difficulties of the original and running the risk of writing above the abilities of the Savoy cast. Sullivan's skill in this respect only really becomes apparent when the writing in the comic operas is compared to that found in *Ivanhoe*, where he had no need to make any concessions to vocal limitations.

Lastly, we approach Sullivan's ambivalent attitude to the music of Richard Wagner. In temperament and attitude, he and Sullivan were at opposite extremes. Sullivan's natural mode of working was collaboration; in stark contrast, Wagner epitomised the solitary Romantic genius who controlled all aspects of the creation of his works of art and their realisation and has the distinction of being one of the few composers of opera who also wrote their own libretti. In August 1897 Sullivan visited Bayreuth to hear the *Ring Cycle*. His diary records some of his most frank adverse criticism. He was at a performance of *Das Rheingold* on 14th August:

Much disappointed in the performance; *all* of them. Orchestra rough and ragged, conducted by Siegfried Wagner. Vocalists beneath contempt. Sometimes stage management is good, but much is conventional and childish. It is difficult to know how Wagner could have got up any enthusiasm or interest in such a lying, thieving, blackguardly set of low creatures as all the characters in his Opera prove themselves to be. (Sullivan Diary: 14 August 1897)

Two days later he attended *Siegfried*:

I think it intolerably dull and heavy, and so undramatic—nothing but 'conversations', and I am weary of Leit Motiven. Burgskater (Tenor) is young and good-looking and has a pretty voice, but he will kill it if he sings Siegfried and similar roles much more. He was dead beat at the end of the Opera. What a curious mixture of sublimity and absolute puerile drivel are all these Wagner operas. Sometimes the story and action would disgrace even a Surrey pantomime. (Sullivan Diary: 16 August 1897)

Weighed against this is Hermann Klein's recollection of meeting Sullivan:

In fact, Sullivan's admiration for Wagner, which was sincere, had always been tempered by reservations, most markedly in his attitude to the *Ring Cycle*, which he felt did not represent a viable means of artistic development within the genre. In an interview he gave in 1885 to the *San Francisco Daily Chronicle* he indicates clearly his views on the aesthetics of opera:

The clearest evidence of Sullivan's enthusiasm for a least one aspect of Wagner's art is to be found in *The Yeomen of the Guard* where he adapts some Wagnerian techniques for his own purposes. His use of a motif to characterise the Tower of London is unusual (see Ex.2.32 below) and has no parallel elsewhere in his music. Certain *situations* tended to invoke a similar musical response, but this portrayal of a place (and one with a distinct personality) in his stage music is unique. The actual musical material occurs also in the introduction to his setting of Shakespeare's 'Sigh no more, ladies' from *Much Ado About Nothing*¹⁰. Sullivan's partiality for Shakespeare recurs throughout his career, culminating in the sets of incidental music he wrote for plays in the 1880s and 1890s.

[illegible]

¹⁰ This passage is also discussed in 3.1 in the context of Sullivan's use of orchestral sonority

tailors and bakers. It also introduces the scene in Act 2 when Fairfax is alleged to have escaped by diving into the moat. This last instance also includes a brief suggestion of the turmoil at the end of the second act of Wagner's opera, with its overlapping vocal entries, but again, Sullivan maintains his sense of proportion.

Sullivan's attitude to what he regards as the defects of the various national schools of opera, as quoted above, is ironic given that he had, at one time or another, exploited all of them for his own purposes within the context of comic opera. In his later stage works, (written in collaboration with librettists other than Gilbert), he does somewhat approach the integrated operatic compromise of which he spoke.

In his capacity as a listener rather than a conductor or an executant, he seems to have remembered everything he heard and had the ability to reproduce it in the form in which he wanted it, sometimes long after the event. Thus, the earlier choral works (and, at certain moments, the early stage works) seem to recall the repertoire of the Chapel Royal, while his essays in purely orchestral music draw upon the experience of hearing the New Music of the late 1850's and early 1860's while a student in Leipzig. Sullivan's experiences as a consumer of music are faithfully reflected in the allusions he makes within his own compositions. However, of perhaps greater significance was his relationship with the written word and his setting of texts.

2.5 The Impact of Literature

Sullivan's relationship with literature is both complex and paradoxical. Although his musical training as a Chapel Royal chorister was very sound, his general education in subjects outside music was somewhat sketchy, as has already been remarked in 1.4. Despite his life-long involvement with the musical theatre, he appeared to have little appreciation of the literary arts. Many of his circle of friends were literary men, such as Burnand and Anthony Hope, the author of *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894). Sullivan seems to have read as a recreation, but to be entertained rather than challenged or moved by what he read. In his diary he frequently records his impressions of the theatrical performances he attended, but by contrast, he nowhere records his response to the reading of a book and this would seem to indicate the relative importance to him of the two media.

In his chapter on Sullivan in *The Creative Conflict*, where most of the discussion centres on Gilbert, Eden remarks that, 'Sullivan showed little capacity to grasp what one might call the literary side of music, that is, in broad terms, the intellectual climate created by romanticism' (Eden, 1986: 166). Sullivan's early emotional involvement with Rachel Scott Russell foundered on her inability to turn him into an intellectual. She went on to prepare the first English translation of the *Memoirs of Berlioz*, a composer with whom Sullivan had a certain affinity, as will become clear.

Another factor may have been that the composer's constant close professional contact with word setting, made the act of reading less of a recreation to him. It certainly seems to be the case that there were distinct limitations to his appreciation of literature as an art form. He found Wagner's tendency to be prolix 'untheatrical', as his reaction to seeing the *Ring Cycle* at Bayreuth shows, recorded in his diary for 16 August 1892, and he found the long exchanges between the characters tedious.

Even his detractors have been forced to concede that Sullivan's skill in word setting was in many ways remarkable. However, on occasion he can demonstrate an astonishing lack of sensitivity to verbal accentuation, such as this passage from the Festival Te Deum (1872), where Sullivan adapts Croft's hymn tune 'St Anne' for the final section of the text. This was written for a Service of Thanksgiving for the recovery of the Prince of Wales from typhoid fever and no doubt Sullivan was pressed for time, but the fact remains that all the false accents in bars 3,5,6,11 and 12, with some minor rhythmic adjustment, could have been avoided.

Ex.2.33 Sullivan, *Festival Te Deum*, beginning of the first choral entry of the last section

O Lord, let Thy mer-cy light-en u-pon us, as our trust is in
Thee O Lord, in Thee have I trust -
ed: let me ne - ver be con - found - ed.

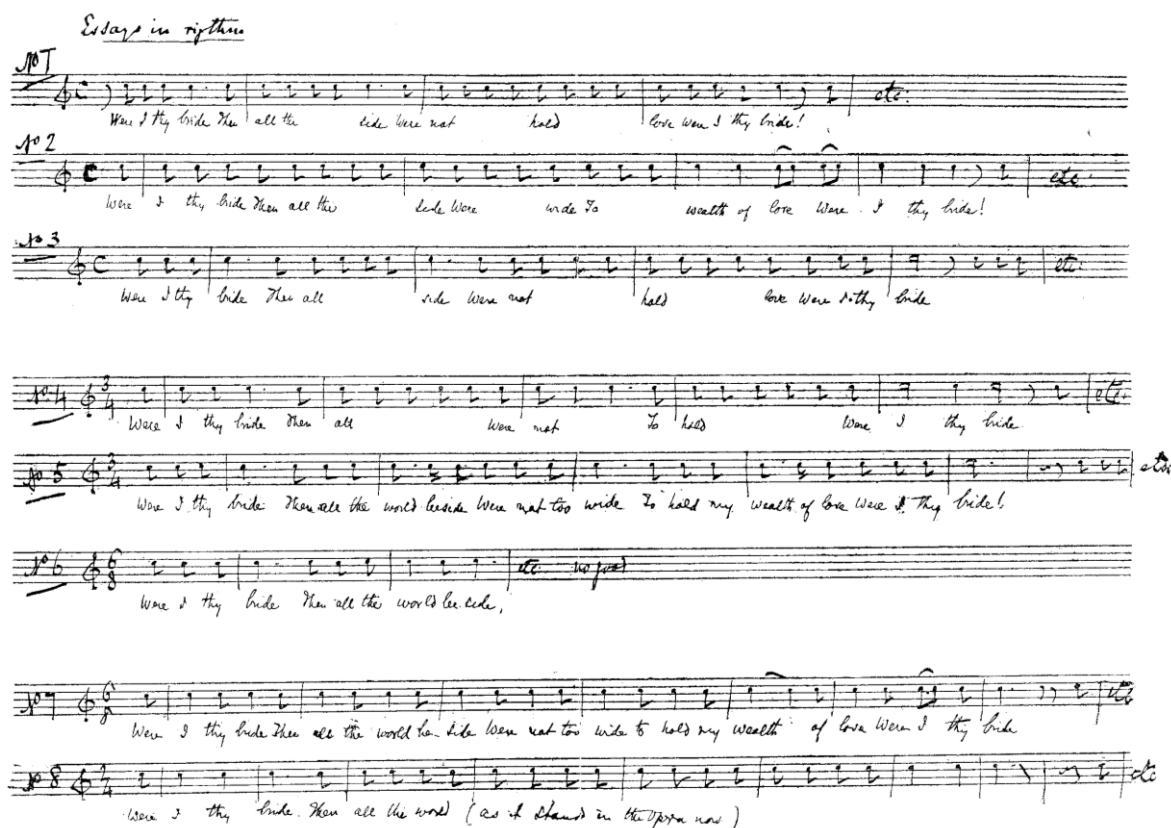
Sullivan's method of dealing with a text is described in the autobiographical volume prepared with the journalist Lawrence towards the end of Sullivan's life. Lawrence quotes him as saying that, 'The first thing I have to decide upon is the rhythm, and I arrange the rhythm before I come to the question of melody' (Lawrence, 1899: 225—227).

Lawrence then gives the example chosen by Sullivan to demonstrate his working methods. This is Phoebe's song 'Were I thy bride' from Act 1 of *The Yeomen of the Guard*. All the six possible variants of the verbal rhythm are quoted in a facsimile of Sullivan's manuscript where he wrote them down for Lawrence's benefit. Sullivan goes on to say that,

You see that five out of six methods were commonplace, and my first aim has always been to get as much originality as possible in the rhythm, approaching the question of melody afterwards. Of course, melody may come before rhythm with other composers, but it is not so with me. If I feel that I cannot get the accent right in any other way, I mark out the metre

in dots and dashes, and it is only after I have decided the rhythm that I proceed to notation (1899: 227).

Figure 1. Sullivan's Essays in Rhythm



Hughes points out that this example 'is sometimes cited as being a smooth metrical metamorphosis, but in fact it is not really a happy instance.'

Although the ten-bar setting of the opening is certainly appropriate, the melody charming, the harmonisation fluent, and the orchestral treatment suitably delicate throughout, the retention of an identical time-pattern for each successive stanza (there eight of them all told) becomes slightly monotonous. Sullivan applied his regular procedure—most successfully—to the first stanza, but thereafter he followed (rhythmically) the line of least resistance (1960: 30).

It is perhaps strange to relate that, for a composer who so often seemed to be keenly aware of the potential of rhythm and metre, his first instinct on reading through a new lyric seems to have been to disregard the metre and follow the natural accentuation of the syllables. This could lead to some surprising similarities where there was a metrical likeness, as in these two examples. The first is the soprano line from the Quintet in Act 1 of *The Gondoliers* and this should be compared to the first line of Sullivan's hymn tune 'Courage Brother' (1872) that follows it. It will be noted that in both

cases the lines have fifteen syllables and the similarity of the rising second limb of the opening phrase, where, in the opera, Sullivan includes slurred quavers.

Ex.2.34 *The Gondoliers*, Act 1, Quintet from bar 1, the soprano part

(a)



(b) Hymn-tune 'Courage Brother' (transposed) from bar 1



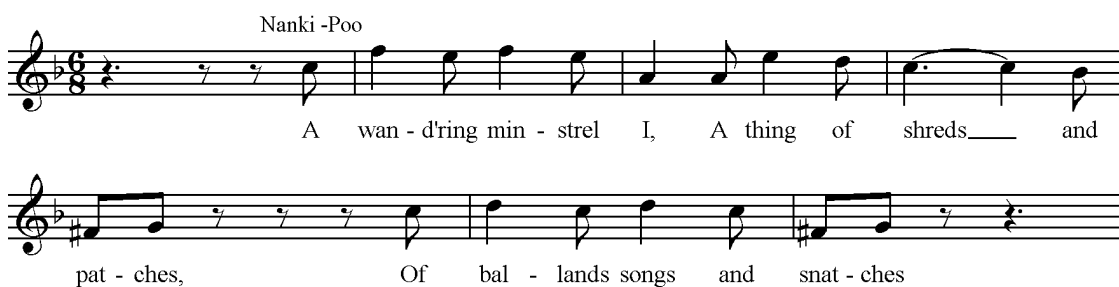
The second is another better-known example which compares the opening vocal phrases of 'I loved her fondly', Carboy's song from *The Zoo* (written with B.C. Stevenson (1839—1906) in 1875, who used the *nom de plume* Bolton Rowe) with that of 'A wand'ring minstrel, I' from *The Mikado*.

Ex.2.35 *The Zoo*, Carboy's song from bar 1

Allegretto



Ex.2.36 *The Mikado*, 'A Wand'ring Minstrel I' from bar 1



Howes, the author of the book *The English Musical Renaissance* (1966), had succeeded Colles as chief music critic of *The Times*. With other critics such as Walker and Fuller-Maitland, he was almost the last of the generation of commentators who seemed to be constitutionally incapable of finding any merit in Sullivan or his music. He says of him that,

'He had no literary discrimination, either to take the measure of the good by exerting a comparable musical effort or to eschew the bad which he set with complete naivety...Art

that is bad from banality has the quality of simplicity, and the settings that Sullivan made in all seriousness of these cheap ballads...won an enormous popularity' (Howes, 1966: 56).

There is a grain of truth in Howes' statement. The possible reasons for this are explored later, but Howes chooses to disregard the circumstances under which these works were written. He quotes from 'one of Sullivan's biographers', whom he does not identify, as saying that, '[Sullivan's] judgement was so easily swayed by popularity and success that he was "market-minded"' (Howes, 1966: 51). At this stage Sullivan was trying to establish himself as a composer at the beginning of his career and, as he made clear to Lawrence (1899: 50), was prepared to turn his hand to anything. Howes goes further: 'The art in them [the ballads] is in the lowest common denominator of artistic creation. They are bad enough to be a disgrace to the composer, but they have in them skill and just a flicker of the fire enough to keep them alive and still pull off a cheap effect' (1966: 56).

Criticism that disregards so much of the context in which a work of art was wrought is of little value, yet Howes' chief concern was to trace the development of the English Musical Renaissance. Despite his reservations about Sullivan's abilities and his doubts concerning whether he would have recognised literary quality when he encountered it, when Howes refers to the comic operas, the longevity of which clearly baffled him, he states that 'except in the single matter of word-setting they lie outside the renaissance' (1966: 57), which is surely significant. It can be further argued that their survival into the twenty-first century within the musical mainstream similarly distinguishes them.

There is some circumstantial evidence to suggest that Sullivan had difficulty in grasping a linear sequence of events presented in prose, as distinct from verse, which seems easily to have transformed in his mind to rhythmic and later, melodic impulses, but sometimes with little regard for their quality. From a twenty-first-century standpoint, this may suggest that he suffered from a mild form of dyslexia and that Sullivan was what might be described, in the technical terms relating to the teaching of the dyslexic, as a 'Visual or Auditory Learner' (www.dyslexiasw.com: accessed 15/02/2016). It should be recalled that Sullivan's first encounter with a new libretto by Gilbert was often at a meeting at his flat when Gilbert would read it aloud to him. It might also partially explain why attendance at the theatre was one of his chief recreations and very demonstrably, if the many entries in his diary are any guide, his preferred method of experiencing literature.

His collaborator in *The Golden Legend*, the critic and journalist Joseph Bennett (1831—1911) leaves an illuminating account of his experience of working with Sullivan and provides a striking illustration of how this specific inability handicapped him in his work. Bennett had received a letter from Sullivan with a copy of Longfellow's poems in which,

Sullivan begged me to come to his relief in the making of a 'book', saying he felt the task, so far as he was concerned, was hopeless. It appeared to me, on going carefully through the marked passages, that Sullivan had selected incidents and scenes admirably adapted for musical effect, but having, in many cases, no relationship to one another. Of course[,] a libretto could not be constructed in that way, and I determined, without hesitation, to take the story of Prince Henry and Elsie out of the mass of matter in the poem and deal with it alone. (Bennett, 1908: 78)

This is consistent with Sullivan's later acquiescence in setting libretti that were structurally unsound. Those of *The Chieftain*, *Haddon Hall*, *Ruddigore* and *Utopia Limited* all suffer from such defects, one that he seems to have been powerless to correct. *Ivanhoe* is constructed without any internal form, being a series of tableaux based on scenes from the novel, which admittedly, would have been familiar to many of the audience. So is *The Light of the World*, save that 'it begins with the Nativity and ends with the Resurrection' (Eden, 1986: 167). Verdi, Puccini and Wagner, despite their many differences, shared a resolve not simply to leave the all the literary considerations to the discretion of the librettist. Wagner, being his own librettist, exercised complete control over all aspects of writing and production. Verdi and Puccini were notoriously demanding collaborators who would refuse even to attempt a setting of a libretto until it had reached the form in which they felt it was *dramatically* most viable. In other words, their own sense of drama informed their view of the *musical* possibilities. In the case of a source such as Scott's *Ivanhoe*, they would both have been likely to discard all the extraneous elements of the plot except the confrontation between Rebecca and The Templar, as, indeed, Marschner (1795—1861) had done in *Der Templar und die Jüdin* (1829), to which *Ivanhoe* was compared by German critics to the latter's disadvantage.

Hughes complains that Sullivan's sense of drama was insufficient (1960: 142) but misses entirely the point of comic opera by complaining about the composer's use of 'a threadbare theatrical convention', which, in this case, was the use of the chord of the diminished seventh at dramatic moments, discussed in detail in 1.7 (1960: 142). Opera, to be comic, must use the conventions of the genre that it then subverts for its own purposes. Yet, in several instances, such as the close of Act 2 of *Princess Ida*, quoted earlier and the end of the first act of *The Mikado*, that even Hughes commends (1960: 54), Sullivan handles the dramatic situation with complete conviction by providing music that is entirely equal to it. The difficulty for contemporary critics and later commentators lay in Sullivan's apparent inability to be consistent. The very mixed quality of his songs (specifically those outside the operas) was due to what seemed to be an indifference to the quality of the texts chosen by him (or possibly for him by the publisher) to set.

Turning to the first significant instance of Sullivan setting words of unquestionable quality, his early set of five songs to texts by Shakespeare was published by Metzler in 1866 but appear to have been

written in 1863-64 (Young, 1971: 273). Young points out that, although *Orpheus with his lute* became the best known of the set, he regards the *Willow Song* and *O mistress mine* as being artistically more successful. In the case of the former, it is instructive to compare it in approach to Sullivan's setting of Gilbert's parody of the lyric in Act 2 of *The Mikado*, 'On a tree, by a river'. It has tended to be assumed that Gilbert drew on Shakespeare at this point, (Act 4, Scene 3 of *Othello*), but there is evidence that this ballad, which seems first to have appeared in a lute book in 1583, was, in fact, adapted by Shakespeare, who changed the gender of the protagonist to make it more relevant to Desdemona (Bloom, 2005: 50-51). The earlier version refers to 'the mute bird sat by him was made tame by his moans' which Shakespeare does not include, although Gilbert does, as his 'tom-tit', although it is not mute, which suggests that his parody is of the original ballad or a version of it. The poet Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718) also paraphrased it and this is cited by Baily (1966: 276). Both of Sullivan's settings are in a slow compound time, the earlier one being more measured in gait to accommodate the words. In the second Sullivan demonstrates the priorities that apply in comic opera by adopting a speed of verbal articulation closer to speech rhythm and eschewing all melodic decoration.

Ex.2.37 (a) 'The Willow Song', conclusion of the first verse

Sing all a green wil - low must be my gar -
land, Sing wil - low, wil - low, wil - low.

(b) *The Mikado*, Act 2, 'On a tree by a river' from bar 1

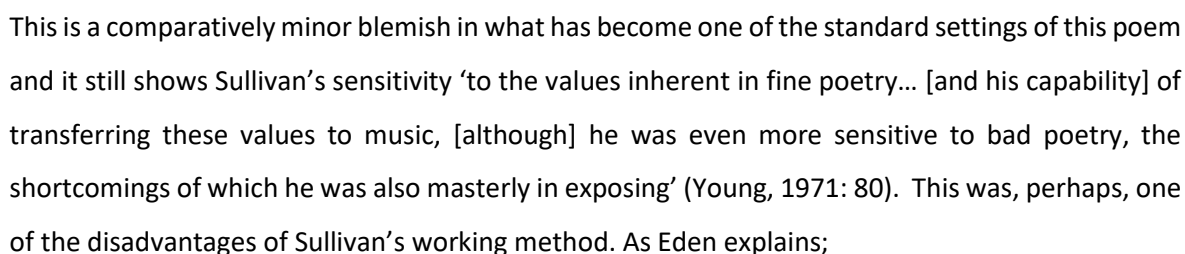
On a tree by a ri-ver a lit-tle tom-tit Sang Wil - low, tit-wil - low, tit - wil - low!

Howes singles out *Orpheus with his lute* as being an example of the composer's ability 'to write a good song, though outside the operas (it) is the only one that now testifies unequivocally to that ability.' 'Even here', he complains, 'his treatment of "killing care" shows his usual lack of poetic appreciation' (Howes, 1966: 56). This passage is given below:

Ex.2.38 'Orpheus with his lute' from bar 16 of the vocal line

In sweet mu - sic is such art, Kill - ing care and grief of heart.

Ex.2.39 Greene, 'Orpheus with his lute' from bar 37



Young makes the point that, while Sullivan was often capable of great subtlety in his use of harmony and tonality, he was equally capable of writing an accompaniment with little more than alternations of tonic and dominant, although in fairness, it should be added that there are places where this is entirely appropriate. The Lord Chancellor's song, 'When I went to the bar' from Act 1 of *Iolanthe*, although harmonically unadventurous, includes an accompaniment in 2/4 time to complement a vocal line in 6/8 time, that provides more than enough interest and momentum. He goes on to cite the *Duo Concertante*, for 'cello and piano (Op.2, 1868) as an example of the composer's 'irresolution in development. It is the kind of piece which may be described as "well-constructed" because the mechanical details of formal design are so evident that they effectively prevent any coherence of idea' (Young, 1971: 80-81). However, Taylor in his article on Sullivan instrumental works and David Owen Norris in his notes that accompany his recent recording of Sullivan's songs (CHAN 10935(2)) disagree with this negative view of the work (*SP1*, 2012: 105).

Here we approach the essence of what made Sullivan the composer he became; his problem seems to have been an inability to perceive 'coherence of idea', in prose or to create it in music in the form of a development of his thematic material. In musical terms the result was likely to be what Young calls 'irresolution', as in the *Duo*, or in the adoption of a strategy which would effectively avoid any crisis, such as his individual form of thematic transformation adapted from Schumann's and Liszt's examples referred to earlier. Its use in the Overture *di Ballo* has already been noted, but it also came to be used as a key feature of his compositional method in the comic operas, and this will be discussed in Chapter 3. When dealing with a literary source, as in his experience of trying to assemble a workable libretto from *The Golden Legend*, he was driven to near despair and would have been powerless to proceed further without Bennett's assistance.

In his best work with Gilbert, the benefits of his working with a librettist with a natural sense of form are strikingly obvious. In his work with others the results are more variable because he felt unable confidently to identify the defects of the book in works such as *Haddon Hall* (1892) with Sydney Grundy and *The Beauty Stone* (1898) with Joseph Comyns Carr and Arthur Pinero, or to suggest workable solutions to the difficulties. Therefore, he tended to accept without demur what the authors gave him to set. However, when writing *Haddon Hall* with Grundy, Sullivan stipulated that he should provide two versions of every lyric, something Gilbert had always been prepared to do on request. Where he did reject a libretto, notably from Gilbert after the production of *Princess Ida* in 1884, it was on the grounds of its improbability, its lack of realism and humanity, such as Gilbert's 'lozenge plot' which, in any event, bore too close a resemblance to that of *The Sorcerer* (1877) to be workable. Sullivan was sceptical of the abstract or the philosophical in music, as was noted above in his response to late Wagner, but also the cerebral, musical dialectics in any form and 'in the consideration of thesis and antithesis, in argument, or in "development"'. He was, in fact, no Brahms' (Young, 1971: 81).

Sullivan's response to stimuli tended to be essentially imaginatively visual. What he saw in his mind's eye came from what he heard such as Gilbert's reading of a new libretto, for example, and these images he transformed into pictures in sound, with the orchestra as his palette. What he witnessed as a member of the audience in the theatre or concert hall stocked his mind with the resources he could draw upon and change into the form in which they were needed in comic opera, in what Young calls his 'inspired eclecticism' (1971: 170). It is this contribution that enables each of the comic operas to,

have an atmosphere of its own, derived from the stage setting, the costumes, and the general tenor of the story. Thus, the music of *Patience* largely reflects the pastel shades of the aesthetic draperies and the languor of the maidens; the grim atmosphere of the Tower

of London is captured in *The Yeomen of Guard* and in *Utopia Limited*— ‘Utopia’ means ‘Nowhere’—the music is mostly null and void. (Eden, 1986: 164)

It is to Hughes’s credit that, in his book on Sullivan’s music, he provides the only detailed analysis of Sullivan’s abilities as a setter of words (1960: 28–43). In his discussion, he generally treats the composer fairly, bestowing praise on those aspects of his work where he was at his best, while drawing attention to his occasional lapses. Hughes devotes considerable space to an explanation of his skill and resource in his setting of a self-contained vocal quartet from *The Gondoliers* (1960: 32). Having above drawn attention to some of the disadvantages of Sullivan’s approach, it is only fair to the composer to highlight an instance where the results are superlative; where both the librettist and composer are at their not inconsiderable best and where, within the limitations of the genre, they both seem, if only for a moment, to touch on the outer reaches of the sublime. The two verses, one sung by the soprano and one by the soubrette, begin as follows:

Ex.2.40 *The Gondoliers*, Finale to Act 1, beginning of the quartet from bar 1

Allegretto
Gianetta

p Now, Mar - co dear, My wish - es hear; While you're a - way
It's un - der - stood You will be good And not too gay.

Ex.2.41 *The Gondoliers*, Finale to Act 1, at beginning of the second verse of the quartet

Tessa

You'll lay your head U - pon your bed At set of sun You
will not sing of an - y - thing To an - y one.

Hughes points out that, in the second verse, the accent at the opening is moved by two syllables; by the time she approaches the refrain, the soubrette is four syllables ahead of the soprano at the corresponding point of the verse. This rhythmic variety and ingenuity ensure that there is no trace of monotony, and unlike the example from *The Yeomen of the Guard* discussed above, Sullivan’s refusal in this case ‘to take, (rhythmically), the line of least resistance’ has the happiest results.

Earlier there was a tentative suggestion that Sullivan may have laboured under a form of dyslexia, and if so, it would be one of the many conditions that would not have been recognised at the time.

What seems to be beyond dispute is that there are distinct signs that Sullivan had difficulty in following a linear sequence of events in prose or in creating such a sequence in his music and this manifested itself in his approach to the dramatic viability of libretti and his apparent lack of interest in conventional musical development in terms of sonata form.

In his first oratorio, *The Prodigal Son*, he succeeded in assembling the book himself from scripture, partly because of his familiarity with the source from his days as a chorister in the Chapel Royal and the fact that the work was intended to be a comparatively short one to fill the first half of a concert at the Worcester Festival of 1869. With *The Martyr of Antioch* (1880) he had to call upon Gilbert's assistance in preparing Dean Milman's poem and by the time he came to write *The Golden Legend* (1886), he had to admit to Bennett (see above) that the task of assembling a workable text from Longfellow's original poem was beyond him.

Having already suggested that Sullivan's response to stimuli was likely to be imaginatively visual, this raises the issue of why the theological parts of the oratorios seem to be less successful than the dramatic sections. The answer would seem to be that they were incapable of providing Sullivan with suitable imaginative pictures that he could realise in sound, often being abstract in concept. A comparison between the first chorus of *The Prodigal Son*, 'There is joy in the presence of the angels of God' (No.2) with 'Let us eat and drink' (No.6), later in the same work demonstrates the difference in Sullivan's approach, to the point where an uninformed and unprejudiced listener might doubt that they were by the same composer. Abstract concepts of any sort, theological or otherwise, were alien to him and because this is demonstrated so markedly in the oratorios, it has tended to be assumed that theology meant nothing to him. However, Bradley (2013: 10–14, 17, 39–40, 47, 61, 110–11, 124, 157, 166, 181–2, 184) has assembled an impressive array of evidence to contradict this assumption and Sullivan emerges as a much more complex personality with a distinctive spiritual identity which is decidedly at variance with the picture of the pleasure-loving hedonist that has come down to posterity.

This chapter has surveyed most of Sullivan's activities undertaken from the time he became a student at the Royal Academy up to the point where he had his most notable success as a composer of orchestral music with the first performance of the Overture *di Ballo* in 1871. In the same year he was to embark upon the series of works that were to form 'his chief title to fame' (Walker, 1907: 243). He had acquired technical expertise, facility and a considerable measure of success. The next period in his life was to prove to be the most significant since it would determine his legacy to posterity.

CHAPTER THREE

Analysis - Sullivan's Use of Style in Practice

Having examined the factors which combined to make Sullivan the composer he became, this third chapter will attempt to analyse those features of his use of style that are most highly characterised. A comprehensive and exhaustive analysis of Sullivan's infinitely varied use of musical style, particularly within his stage works, is beyond the scope of this study. Underpinning much of Sullivan's music is the central role of the orchestra, which often, even in the choral works, seems to take precedence over the other forces. The first part of the chapter discusses the place of the orchestra in Sullivan's use of style and this is followed by further sections that examine other features such as his portrayal of the exotic, his use of chromaticism and the influences of two of the most individual composers of the period, Berlioz and Liszt¹¹. The final section traces Sullivan's development as a composer of oratorio being, with comic opera, the genre in which he worked most consistently throughout his career.

In the series of comic operas written both with Gilbert and other collaborators, Sullivan was to produce what came to be regarded as his most characteristic work. Sullivan's approach to writing music tended to be the same, regardless of the genre and the style which he chose to employ; *The Martyr of Antioch* was written at about the same time as *Patience*, in late 1880. His approach to the technical details of word setting, dramaturgy and orchestration was correspondingly similar. This chapter examines various aspects of Sullivan's approach to musical style with an emphasis on those instances where dramatic considerations demanded that it should be highly characterised. As a preliminary, the first section examines the evidence for regarding the orchestra as almost the prime component in Sullivan's style, followed by examples which have been chosen to demonstrate the strong contrasts observable in his works.

3.1 The Orchestra as a Component in Sullivan's Style

In relation to Sullivan's approach to the orchestra, Hughes quotes an anecdote related to him by Leslie Heward (1897–1943), an outstanding British conductor of the inter-war years, who had been a student at the Royal Manchester College of Music in about 1914. Hughes says that,

He was given a series of private object lessons by the leading wind-players of the Hallé Orchestra. He expected them to demonstrate the characteristics of their respective instruments—and their own prowess—in the classic solos from *Euryanthe*, *A Midsummer*

¹¹ The reference to Berlioz and Liszt should not be interpreted as an attempt to discount the enormous influence of both Verdi and Wagner. Sullivan's stage works show evidence of his knowledge of the music of both composers, but their almost exclusive preoccupation with opera meant that Sullivan was drawn to these other influences when attempting works in genres to which both Berlioz and Liszt had contributed.

Night's Dream, Tristan, Don Juan and so on, but to his surprise a majority chose passages from *The Golden Legend*... (1960: 96 n1)

He goes on to comment that 'It is pleasant to be reminded that Sullivan's attributes were still appreciated by instrumentalists at a time when his reputation as a whole was under somewhat of a cloud so far as responsible musical circles were concerned' (1960: 96 n1). The central position of the orchestra in Sullivan's output is unusual, as is the almost complete absence of instrumental or chamber music, save a handful of piano pieces in the current drawing-room style and the *Duo Concertante* for cello and piano. The orchestra was the medium that seemed to be most natural to him and in which as a composer he was enabled to be most truly himself and this section explores the reasons why this should be so. Sullivan's father had tested the professional opportunities available in London, but the combination of teaching, orchestral playing and music copying did not generate sufficient income and he returned to the army in late April 1845. For the young Sullivan, this was an event of great significance. Thomas Sullivan not only allowed Arthur to attend the band practices, but his son's participation in them would have been invaluable for his technical development and useful to the band. This consisted of only 12 players and it is likely that they were sufficiently versatile to substitute on different instruments. By the time Arthur was eight years old, he 'had learned to play almost every wind instrument in his father's band with no little facility', as he explained to Lawrence, the journalist who prepared the autobiographical volume on Sullivan towards the end of his life.

In his own words his knowledge of these instruments, among them the flute, clarinet (*sic*), horn, cornet, trombone and euphonium, was not 'a mere passing acquaintance, but a life-long and intimate friendship.' It was, indeed, an acquirement by no means necessarily included in the curriculum of every would-be composer. In this way he had gradually learnt the peculiarities of each instrument, where it was strong and where it was weak—first steps, indeed, in this branch of his art, and an acquisition of knowledge which was to prove eventually of such assistance in his orchestration (1899: 4).

When Sullivan began his studies at the Royal Academy of Music in the autumn of 1856 Sterndale Bennett taught him piano and Goss, harmony and composition, but the study of 'instrumentation', as it was then known, does not appear to have been part of the curriculum. Goss wrote little for the orchestra and in the entry on him in *The Grove Dictionary of Music* describes him as composing, 'mainly glees and anthems' (Ed. Sadie, Vol.10, 2001: 185). However, doubtless with a view to adding to the instrumental knowledge he had already acquired, 'Sullivan's instruction at the Academy also included violin lessons—it is not known with what teacher' (Jacobs, 1984: 13).

When he arrived in Leipzig in September 1858 he began studying instrumentation with Rietz. Unlike Goss, Rietz was to spend almost his entire career working with the orchestra. Having studied the

cello, he played in various theatre orchestras in Berlin and in 1834 was appointed Second Conductor of the Düsseldorf Opera. In addition to teaching at the Conservatorium in Leipzig, from 1848 to 1860 he conducted the Gewandhaus Concerts (Ed. Sadie, 2001: 375).

One of the few textbooks available at this time was Berlioz's *Grand Traité d'Instrumentation et d'Orchestration Modernes*, first published in 1844 and in a revised and enlarged edition in 1855, that included Berlioz's chapter on the art of the conductor. There seems to be no actual documentary evidence of Sullivan's knowledge of this textbook, but, given its pre-eminence at this period, it is likely that he did know it.¹² In his edition of Berlioz's *Treatise*, with which he provides a commentary, Macdonald quotes Berlioz stating his intentions: 'Our purpose in the present work is simply to study instruments which are used in modern music and to seek the laws which govern the setting up of harmonious combinations and effective contrasts between them while making special note of their expressive capabilities and of the character appropriate to each' (2002: xii).

Macdonald points out that, 'The study of an instrument's character and expressive potential was really more important to Berlioz than its range and technical limits, careful though he was to set out the latter in as clear a manner as possible' (2002: xiii). Such practical information was readily available in textbooks devoted to the study of individual instruments. Berlioz's concern was to indicate his personal view of the uses of orchestral colour while also demonstrating that this was consonant with a tradition that included, Gluck, Spontini, Beethoven and Weber among others.

Berlioz had reviewed favourably two books by Georges Kastner (1810-67), a composer and musicologist from Strasbourg, on instrumentation, but felt that they had understated what could be achieved by the art, which, in Berlioz's view, was '[that] of generating emotion by one's choice of timbres, independent of any considerations of melody, rhythm or harmony' (2002: xviii). This was the purpose behind his selection of the many examples he cites in the *Treatise* and Macdonald suggests that the writing of this review, where he also gives a number of such instances, gave him the idea of writing his own work which 'would expound the art as he saw it despite Kastner's very comprehensive handbook' (2002: xviii).

Unlike much of his music, Berlioz's textbook was a notable success both in France and abroad and Macdonald tells us that Mahler, Elgar, Delius, Busoni, d'Indy, Debussy, Puccini and Strauss were all known to have used it. Also, he notes that most later books on the subject, such as those by Rimsky-Korsakov and Widor are, to some extent, indebted to it (2002: xiv).

¹² The online catalogue of the library of the Royal Academy of Music shows that the library acquired a copy of the first edition of Berlioz's revised version in 1856 and a copy of the second edition in 1858. It was translated by Mary Cowden Clarke and published by Novello.

As to the direct impact on Sullivan's music, Hughes cites a passage from the *Marmion* Overture (1867) (1960: 99) where short melodic figures are given first to the two flutes in octaves followed in the next bar by flute and oboe in octaves, shown below. Macdonald comments that 'Melodies in which the flute plays with other woodwind in unison or an octave above are common. A flute supported by a clarinet an octave lower is a very characteristic Berlioz timbre (2002:141)'. However, while discussing 'traces of Berlioz' influence' (*sic*) Hughes appears to overlook the more obvious similarity in the passage he mentions and Berlioz's practice in Sullivan's writing for the trombones. The use of wind instruments in octaves is nothing unusual in nineteenth-century orchestration, but Berlioz's treatment of the trombones is characteristic. The following passage is taken from the Overture *Le carnaval romain* (1844).

Ex.3.1 (a) Berlioz Overture *Le carnaval romain* from bar 304

Allegro vivace

The musical score for Trombone 1 and Trombone 2 & 3 from Berlioz's Overture *Le carnaval romain*, bar 304, is shown. The tempo is *Allegro vivace*. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. Trombone 1 plays a melody starting on G4, moving up stepwise to B4, then down to A4, G4, F#4, and E4. Trombone 2 & 3 play a lower octave version of the same melody, starting on G3. Both parts are marked 'p' (piano). The score is written on two staves with a brace connecting them.

In his Overture Sullivan follows Berlioz's example quite closely, as he also does in his use of woodwind in the excerpt from *Iolanthe* also cited by Hughes (1960: 90) and shown at Ex.3.2. The chords are played by the flutes and clarinets, while the bassoon provides the pedal note. The vocal line, sung by the Lord Chancellor, is doubled by the first violins and harmonised by the other strings.

Ex.3.1 (b) Overture *Marmion*, bars 35 to 39

Andante Maestoso

2 flutes

Flutes

Horn in Eb

Horn in D

Trombones I & II

Violin 2

Vas. & Vc. (div)

Double Bass

Flute

Oboe

p ma marcato

Ex.3.2 *Iolanthe* Act 2, No.7, the Lord Chancellor's song, bars 81 to 89

Flutes & Clats

Bassoon

Lord Chancellor

bi - cy - cle. And he and the crew are on by - cy - cles too which they've

Strings

some-how or oth-er in - veste-ed in And he's tell-ing the tars, all the par-tic - u-lars of a

The Influence of Schubert's Ninth Symphony on Sullivan's Overture *In Memoriam*

In Chapter Two it was remarked that Schubert's Ninth Symphony had clearly made a deep impression on Sullivan and nowhere is this more apparent than in his Overture *In Memoriam*. Not only does Sullivan follow Schubert's example in the matter of scoring, such as his use of the trombones for a slow-moving theme that is such a feature of the development section, as discussed on page 99, but in many other ways.

These include his use of major and minor tonality, often as a means of modulation to more remote keys. Similarly, Sullivan's use of repetition has a parallel in Schubert's symphonic procedures. Both Schubert and Sullivan use dotted rhythms, particularly in the accompaniment figures given to the

wind instruments and this may be found in the transition of Sullivan's sonata-form structure. Finally, the likeness of the shaping of the string figures in both works is also noticeable.

In addition, Sullivan was also influenced by the middle section (*Adagio*) of Schubert *Fantasie Der Wanderer* D760 and this is discussed on page 107. The blend of Schubertian rhythmic and melodic traits combined with significant indications of his influence detectable in Sullivan's orchestration, makes the relationship between the two works unusually strong. Only one other example appears to be as striking and that is between Mahler's Third Symphony (1896) and the debt owed by the composer to the solitary Symphony in E flat (1878) by the tragic Hans Rott (1858—1884). Like Sullivan, Mahler was strongly influenced by Rott's melodic and harmonic traits, but also his orchestration. Parts of the Finale of Mahler's work almost sound like direct quotation, just as parts of Sullivan's Overture have as close a resemblance to the last movement of Schubert's symphony and to a lesser degree, to parts of the first. While both Mendelssohn and Schumann exercised a powerful influence on Sullivan's development as a composer, it was Schubert more than any other to whom he felt the closest affinity.

Having acquired a detailed knowledge of the capabilities of most of wind instruments during his boyhood, Sullivan seems to have augmented this by becoming at least a competent string player. He succeeded in persuading Dreyschock to accept him as a pupil and this suggests that his abilities in this area were at least comparable to his skill as a pianist. Therefore, quite early in his development, Sullivan could draw on an executant's detailed knowledge of both wind and string instruments. As a composer he tended to conceive his music in its appropriate orchestral timbre. The practical disadvantage of this is that the keyboard reductions of his works tend to sound at best commonplace and at worst banal. Only 14 wind instruments are needed to play this opening theme that is used by Sullivan throughout the opera as a unifying element, a musical representation of the Tower and an example of Sullivan's adaptation of the Wagnerian technique of *leitmotif* discussed earlier in 1.7. The disposition of the various parts shows the composer's care in writing for each instrument in its most effective register, a result of his close acquaintance with them during his formative years in his father's band, which, as noted above, numbered only twelve players, the same number of wind players as would have been found in the theatre orchestra of this time: two flutes, one oboe, two clarinets, one bassoon, two horns, two cornets and two trombones. However, from 1888 onwards, the year of this opera, he included a second bassoon and a third trombone.

It should also be noted that, where one might have expected the clarinets to be placed, namely between the oboe and the cornets, in fact they play in unison an octave above the first trombone and a third above the two bassoons. The aural balance is perfect, but only a composer with the most detailed knowledge of the capabilities of wind instruments would know that clarinets and bassoons in that register would blend so seamlessly with the trombones, thus complementing the

two horns placed in thirds above them. This is cited by Hughes as an example of Sullivan's economy in his use of instrumental resources, 'the component parts are so skilfully laid out that the whole is as sonorous as though the band were of Wagnerian proportions' (1960: 97).

Ex.3.3 Overture to *The Yeomen of the Guard*, from bar 2 in reduced score

2 Flutes, Oboe, 2 Cornets, 2 Horns (actual sounds)

2 Clarinets and Trombone I (actual sounds)

2 Bassoons, Trombones II & III (actual sounds)

For comparison the transcription provided in the vocal score by J.H. Wadsworth is given below. His approach is too literal and the wide spacing of the hands makes his version ineffective as keyboard music. In the case of the well-known comic operas, this is not too much of a hardship. Recordings of them with Sullivan's orchestrations have been widely available for many years. However, until recently, works such as *The Beauty Stone* (1898) and *The Rose of Persia* (1899) could only be judged on the evidence of the vocal score, no full score being available, and this can result in a serious distortion of the composer's intentions. This also applies to the oratorios, although both *The Golden Legend* and *The Prodigal Son* are now available in recordings on compact disc (Hyperion CDA67280 and Hyperion CDA67423 respectively).

Ex.3.4 Overture to *The Yeomen of the Guard*, vocal score piano reduction from bar 1

Allegro brillante e maestoso

f

Below is the opening of Sullivan's setting of 'Sigh no more' from Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Here the introduction bears a strong resemblance to the opening theme of Sullivan's opera. Conceived for the medium of the piano, it is entirely satisfying in its own terms, but when used by Sullivan in the Overture, it is reduced to its essentials; the keyboard quaver figuration is omitted and it becomes a series of rising thirds placed below a dotted crotchet figure that outlines the arpeggio and contrasts with the rising scale by being tied across the bar line. This is also discussed earlier in 1.7 in relation to the subject of typology.

Ex.3.5 Song 'Sigh No More', piano introduction



One of Sullivan's characteristics was his consummate skill in thinking musically in terms of an instrument's capabilities. One such instance is the opening of the Finale to the first act of *Patience* (1881). The two flutes are placed in thirds above a light accompaniment of violas and cellos. This scene is intended to evoke the dancing of the Greek classical period. The first four lines of Gilbert's lyric make this clear:

Let the merry cymbal sound,
Gaily pipe Pandaeon pleasure,
With a Daphnephoric bound
Tread a gay but classic measure.

Sullivan provides music in a consciously antique style, using an instrumental combination which is mentioned with approval by Berlioz in the *Treatise* where he quotes a passage from the Priests' Chorus in Act 1 of Antonio Sacchini's (1730-86) opera *Oedipe a Colonne*, (1786) 'O vous que l'innocence même'. This passage is as lightly scored as Sullivan's, the only difference being the inclusion of a binding note from the horn in the tenor register. However, the pace of Sacchini's chorus is considerably slower and fulfils a different function within his opera. This may be compared to these bars from *Patience*, not because of any thematic similarity, as there is none, but because Sullivan's use of the instruments is so similar and that Sacchini's work is set in the ancient classical period which Sullivan was also invoking. This is unlikely to have been a matter of chance and it is interesting to speculate whether Sullivan recalled this passage from the *Treatise* when he came to score this number.

Ex.3.6 Sacchini, *Oedipe a Colonne*, Act 1, No.9 from bar 1

Largo e sotto voce

Flutes

Strings

Horn

Ex.3.7 *Patience*, Act 1 Finale from bar 3

Allegretto Moderato

Bar 3

Flutes 1 & 2

p Cellos and Violas

f

Berlioz also quotes the deeply expressive solo for the oboe in Gluck's *Iphigenie en Aulide*. That Sullivan had the same instinct is shown in this melodic fragment from the opening chorus from *Patience*; as Hughes remarks, 'snatches of melody admirably suited to its tone-colour seemed to spring naturally to his mind' (Hughes, 1960: 104).

Ex.3.8 *Patience*, Act 1 opening chorus from bar 29



Similarly, from the same opera, this characteristic writing for the clarinet occurs in the refrain of the Quintet from Act 2 and indeed it is difficult to imagine it being played on any other instrument.

Ex. 3.9 *Patience*, Act 2 Quintet from bar 35

Clarinet in B flat - actual sounds



Some of the most idiomatic nineteenth century writing for the solo clarinet is to be found in Weber's works. The example above may be compared to this opening theme from the third movement of Weber's First Clarinet Concerto in F minor, Op 73. Specifically, the wide leaps in the melody and the placing of the accent in the middle of the bar are similar in effect, although the tessitura of Sullivan's line is actually higher than Weber's.

Ex.3.10 Weber, Clarinet Concerto No.1, Op 73, third movement from bar 1



It is a vexed question as to why a certain phrase seems more suitable for one instrumental colour as opposed to another. Ex.3.8 and Ex.3.9 above demonstrate the difference in Sullivan's writing for the oboe and clarinet respectively. There would be no technical problem were the clarinet to play Ex.3.8, although the slower, more languorous line seems more suitable for the oboe, possibly because traditionally this is how composers have tended to use it; short slow-moving solos requiring great expression. By contrast, the clarinet is noted for its agility, greater than that of the oboe with more reliable intonation and it is this quality that composers have tended to exploit. The clarinet extract from *Patience* would be almost physically impossible on the oboe, the top E flat being 'thin and unsatisfactory in tone' in Jacob's phrase (1940: 22) and therefore it is more suitable for the clarinet, which also has the advantage, unlike the oboe, of being available at different pitches, such as the E flat clarinet which Berlioz uses to such telling effect in the final movement of the *Symphonie Fantastique*.

In *Ruddigore*, for the Scena for Mad Margaret, Sullivan provides a characteristic solo for the flute recalling Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835) for the character's entrance. Later, to highlight the words 'the clerk scratching a blot', Sullivan echoes the phrase for the flute in the bassoon, complete with acciaccaturas, ending with a melodic fragment perfectly suited to the bassoon timbre near the top of the instrument's range.

Ex.3.11 *Ruddigore*, Act 1, No. 11 from bar 23

Mad Margaret

But the lark
Flute

And the clerk,

Strings

Bassoon

I re - mark, Com — fort me not!

Bassoon

These examples demonstrate Sullivan's interest in the expressive potential of each instrument and his ability to think in its characteristic idiom. At times he appears to go further by selecting a tonality to suit the timbre he wishes to use. One such instance occurs in Scene Three of *The Golden Legend*, at the point where Lucifer appears disguised as a pilgrim. Sullivan considered that the brass ensemble was the most suitable orchestral colour to accompany Lucifer's explanation for his presence, and for that reason, he chose the key of E flat minor.

Hughes implies criticism here and suggests that Sullivan has gone too far in demonstrating his ingenuity in this field and that, in this case, in his writing for the trombones, he was being 'almost too enterprising' (1960: 112). He quotes the following passage from the bass trombone part and points out that the figure indicated by [a] does not present any technical difficulty as the passage stands, but had it been written in any other key, this figure would have required so many rapid changes of slide position as to make it almost impossible to play at the required speed. Nevertheless, the passage would make considerable demands on the physical endurance of the player (Jacob, 1940: 62). Composers have always written to the extremes of an instrument's capabilities and in the nineteenth century figures such as Beethoven, Berlioz and Wagner did this often in their music. This would appear to be a minor instance of Sullivan doing the same thing, but

more importantly, the passage as orchestrated by Sullivan is extremely effective, the brass group adding a genuine element of visceral excitement, like the Demons' Chorus in Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, to which reference is also made in Chapter 4 when Sullivan's work is discussed in detail.

Ex.3.12 *The Golden Legend*, Scene 3 from bar 163



Further in the same scene a seascape is depicted, which has attracted some favourable comment, with Young comparing it approvingly to 'the best of Stanford' (1971: 223) (see quotation on p.248). The transition, which leads to it from the procession of pilgrims referred to above, affords another instance of Sullivan's skill in working with timbre. In the orchestral version Sullivan's use of wind colour is particularly notable, including the Cor Anglais, with the lower strings providing the undulating accompaniment in semiquavers. The key is B flat minor, one entirely suitable for wind instruments placed comparatively high in their registers, providing an excellent contrast for the low-lying string writing. As with the opening of the Overture to *The Yeomen of the Guard* discussed earlier, this characteristic orchestral texture as presented in the vocal score may indicate, in a literal sense, the musical argument, but the effect in terms of sound is very undistinguished.

Sullivan's thematic references retain their orchestral colour from earlier in the Scene and this must be sacrificed in the piano reduction. Any such arrangement compromises the composer's intentions, but Sullivan's music suffers more than most precisely because of his skill as an orchestrator. Little of the effect of this very atmospheric passage is conveyed by the arranger, who had little choice but to provide a succession of wide-ranging arpeggios in the left hand, alternated with repeated chords, as shown below. Again, the keyboard writing is far from idiomatic, with the hands placed too far apart, as shown in bars 3 and 4 and bars 7 and 8, where a less exact attempt to reproduce the effect of the orchestral score would have been desirable. The right-hand chords in these bars simply reproduce the spacing of the woodwind writing.

Ex.3.13 *The Golden Legend*, Scene 3, from bar 248





Sullivan's resource as a composer for the orchestra is certainly shown clearly both in the comic operas, although some restraint was needed if the words were to remain clear, but even more so in those works where this was not the prime consideration. In the case of *The Golden Legend*, the orchestra really takes precedence over the soloists and chorus. In his music for the theatre, where an unusual demand was made on his orchestral ingenuity, Sullivan seemed always to rise to the occasion. One such example is to be found in *Haddon Hall* (1892), where one character, McCrankie, a Puritan Scot, is accompanied by an orchestral imitation of the bagpipes. The opening bars of 'The Scotch Dance' are given below. Sullivan's care over the details of the ornamentation is apparent and would seem to be entirely idiomatic for the medium.

Ex.3.14 *Haddon Hall*, Act 3, No.22a The Scotch Dance from bar 1

However, it must be said that, due to a too literal approach by the publisher's staff arranger (King Hall), it makes poor keyboard writing, the many grace notes being difficult to execute at speed and the occasional wide leaps in the melodic line make it almost impossible to play cleanly.

Two years later he was given a similar challenge in *Utopia Limited* (1893). In the second act Gilbert created an extravagant burlesque of a Downing Street cabinet meeting, the ministers sitting on the stage in the manner, familiar to Victorian audiences, of the Christy Minstrels at the St James's Hall, Piccadilly. King Paramount, sitting in the middle of the row, asks 'You are not making fun of us? This is in accordance with the practice at the Court of St James's?' To which the Lord Chamberlain replies, 'Well, it is in accordance with the practice at the Court of St James's Hall.' The musical material is an adaptation by Sullivan of the Dance that was appended to the plantation song 'Johnny Get Your Gun' (1886), words by T.L. Clay and the music by F. Belasco. In the introduction Sullivan appears to refer to a quotation or at least a variant of 'The Keel Row', the Northumbrian folksong, but what seizes the attention is Sullivan's clever orchestral imitation of banjos.

Shaw, somewhat uncharacteristically, gave *Utopia Limited* a very warm reception and warned his readers 'not to infer that [it] was full of buffooneries with the bassoon and piccolo'. He was particularly taken by this number and of the 'mock-banjo accompaniment' he says, 'we are on the plane, not of the bones and tambourine, but of Mozart's accompaniments to 'Soave sia il vento' in *Così fan tutte* and the entry of the gardener in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Of course [,] these things are ...thrown away on people who are not musicians, whereas anyone can understand mere horseplay with the instruments' (quoted in Baily, 1967: 381–2). Below is given the introduction to the number in full, with the solo voice entering in the bar where the extract stops.

Ex.3.15 *Utopia Limited*, Act 2, No.14 from bar 1

Allegro con brio

staccato

It is interesting to note that in this ensemble Sullivan departs from his usual practice in the comic operas of doubling fragments of the vocal line with wind instruments. The solo voice is quite unsupported except by the clarinet playing the accompaniment figure and the cellos the bass, which ensures maximum audibility and creates an approximation of the tone colour of the banjo. In terms of scoring, the chorus is approached more conventionally, the Flowers of Progress

supporting the King in harmony, judiciously doubled by the orchestra. The idea of a mock Christy Minstrel number in a late nineteenth-century comic opera might be viewed askance today, but Gilbert was careful to exclude anything suggestive of race. The disposition of the actors on the stage and the musical allusions are the only indications of the basis for the satire. Even writing in 1960, Hughes remarks of it that, 'it will be hard to persuade those who have never seen the opera that it was anything more than an ingenious piece of fooling, possibly not in the best of taste' (144). Nevertheless, this should not prevent an appreciation of Sullivan's skill in realising successfully the desired effect.

Eden says of Sullivan that '[his] imagination was probably most truly itself in the creation of sound as such' (Eden, 1986: 165). Shaw, no friend of the fashion for oratorio at this period, was prepared to exempt *The Golden Legend* from his usual strictures because it was such an eloquent expression of 'the composer's sheer love of sound' (Eden, 1986: 165). Most of his music was conceived in this medium, in timbre, and is inseparable from it. Sullivan's early experience of playing in his father's band was probably the most significant factor in creating this unusual sensitivity to sonority. The shortcomings of the various arrangements for the piano, discussed above and unavoidable in the case of stage works for practical reasons, have, in some cases, affected the estimates of the worth of certain of Sullivan's works where these have been the only source available.

Of his younger contemporaries, only Edward German (1862–1936) in works such as *A Princess of Kensington* (1903) or *Merrie England*, (1902) comes close to approaching Sullivan in facility for writing for the orchestra, particularly for the restricted resources of the theatre band. The orchestral writing in a work such as *The Geisha* (1896) by Sydney Jones (1861–1946) is entirely competent and not unpleasing, but the orchestral element does not have the same presence such as may be found in any of Sullivan's theatrical works and the same may be said of the very successful musical comedies by Lionel Monckton, a friend of Sullivan's. These are in perhaps a slightly different category since the Robert Courtneidge management for whom they were written, deputed the orchestration to their resident Musical Director, Arthur Wood, a practice later followed by American producers when employing composers such as the young George Gershwin or Jerome Kern and later Richard Rogers.

It is undeniable that Sullivan's music contains faults, and these arise from his tendency to work under pressure and when doing so, not necessarily ensuring that the material was of the absolute highest quality, much, on occasion, having to be sacrificed to meet a deadline. From time to time Sullivan seems to have succumbed to the temptation to provide the type music that he knew would be appreciated, given the aesthetic of the time. Into this category would fall the weaker songs and ballads for which there was a market and possibly certain passages from the choral works such as 'O Gladsome Light' in *The Golden Legend*. However, there seems to be no basis for the charge,

made by both Fuller-Maitland and Walker, that Sullivan sought *popularity* for its own sake. His most popular song outside the operas was (and this is still the case) *The Lost Chord*, written in memory of his brother and emphatically not for commercial reasons. In the case of his works that employ orchestral forces, even the weakest of them are redeemed by his sure technique and a rare sensitivity for orchestral colour and sonority.

3.2 Sullivan and the Evocation of the Exotic

At various times in Sullivan's career he was called upon to portray or evoke, what may broadly be termed, the exotic. The most obvious example is in *The Mikado* (1885), but even here, all is not what it may seem. The target for Gilbert's satire in the comic opera is not Japan, but Great Britain seen from the perspective of a country with superficial resemblances to Japan. The references in the Mikado's song to 'Parliamentary trains', 'suburban hops' and 'Monday Pops' make this clear. This is fully supported by Sullivan who, while quoting within the work what purported to be a genuine Japanese melody (Miya Sama, Miya Sama), and is also designated 'The March of the Mikado's Troops' (Ex.3.16), does not attempt a thorough musical characterisation of the East, but instead draws from his usual eclectic group of sources with a certain amount of what may be described as quasi-oriental top-dressing. The first four bars of this theme contain a pentatonic melodic cell that is the source of a significant proportion of the melodic material.

Ex.3.16 Chorus at the Entrance of the Mikado, Act 2 from bar 13



Mi - ya sa - ma, mi - ya sa - ma, On n'm - ma no ma - yé ni Pi - ra - Pi - ra su - ra no wa

Nan_ gia_ na_ To - ko ton - ya - sé ton - ya - sé na!

This is used throughout the opera, most notably for the reception of the Mikado himself. However, Sullivan also uses a popular music hall song 'The Fine Old English Gentleman' in the opening phrase of the chorus where Koko, the Lord High Executioner, makes his entrance ('Behold the Lord High Executioner'), thus indicating ironically that Koko is, in fact, a peculiarly British type of 'small man', (a 'cheap tailor', in fact), who has been promoted beyond his abilities.

Ex.3.17 *The Mikado*, Act 1 'Behold the Lord High Executioner' from the vocal entry

Doubled by the orchestra

TENORS

Be-hold the Lord High Ex - e - cu-tion-er! A

BASSES

Ex.3.18 Traditional, 'The Fine Old English Gentleman', music arranged by Greatorex Newman, words by Henry Russell, c.1830.

Oh that fine old Eng - lish gen - tle - man,

Sullivan also makes use of the pentatonic scale several times in the work, most clearly in the introduction to the opening chorus, but which in its effect seems to recall the European folk style of Smetana and Dvořák and this passage should be compared to Smetana's Overture to *The Bartered Bride* (1863–70), as shown below:

Ex.3.19 *The Mikado*, Act 1, the opening chorus from bar 5

Ex.3.20 Smetana, Overture to *The Bartered Bride*, from bar 1



In fact, the perceived resemblance derives from both the constant motion of the music and the use of the characteristic pentatonic figure, as shown in the first three bars of Ex. 3.21 quoted below which is referred to above as a pentatonic melodic cell. Sullivan uses it consistently in his introduction that builds to a highpoint on the dominant chord just before the voices enter. Smetana uses it only in the opening flourish where it moves downwards before the repeating quaver figure is established.

Ex. 3.21 (a) Pentatonic Melodic Cell



The pattern or variants of it occur in the introduction to Yum-Yum's song in Act 2, 'The sun whose rays are all ablaze',

(b)



the introduction to the duet for Katisha and Koko in Act 2, 'There is beauty in the bellow of the blast'

(c)



and at other points. The main feature is the two falling thirds separated by one step and in both the above examples, preceded by a rising fourth. In the case of (b) there is a link with the material used

in the introduction to the opening chorus, which is also in the same key of G major (see Ex.3.19 above) and of which it is a form of inversion.

In his late opera, *The Beauty Stone* (1898), Sullivan writes a similar passage as the introduction to a chorus and here the resemblance is closer. As in Smetana's Overture, the strings enter in succession in imitation, there is an extended crescendo and instead of the climactic orchestral chords, the voices enter, as occurs in Ex. 3.19. The action of the opera is laid in mediaeval Flanders, but there is no suggestion that Sullivan was attempting to delineate any specific European folk idiom.

Ex.3.22 *The Beauty Stone*, Act 1 chorus from bar 1

The musical score for Ex.3.22, Act 1 chorus from bar 1 of *The Beauty Stone*, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the Double Bass (D.B.) and Violoncello (Vc.) parts. The second system shows the Violins (Vln. 1, Vln. 2) and Viola (Vla.) parts. The music is marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The score is in 2/2 time, key of G major (one sharp). The first system shows the D.B. and Vc. parts, with the Vc. part starting in the second measure. The second system shows the Vln. 1, Vln. 2, and Vla. parts, with the Vln. 2 and Vla. parts starting in the second measure. The music is marked with a piano (p) dynamic.

The relationship between European culture and the exotic (or the Orient) at this period is a complex one and before proceeding further in exploring Sullivan's connection with it, some attempt should be made to establish what that relationship was and how it manifested itself. Opera as an art form is peculiarly rich in examples of the representation of other cultures: Rameau's *Les Indes Galante* (1735), Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782), Weber's *Abu Hassan* (1811) and Puccini's *Turandot* (1926) are among the best-known examples. In his chapter entitled 'Orientalism and Musical Style', Derek B. Scott makes the point that, in Western music, Eastern ethnic practices have largely been disregarded and attempts to imitate an Orientalist style have tended to refer to earlier attempts to do the same thing. He also quotes Edward Said as saying that, 'We need not look for correspondence between the language used to depict the Orient and the orient itself, not so much because the language is inaccurate but because it is not even trying to be accurate...' (Said, 1978: 71–72, quoted in Scott, 2003: 155). Said goes on say that the object is to present the Orient as alien in the context of a theatrical stage which is otherwise entirely European, as are the actors and the audience.

However, this was not always the case. Westrup's comment about Purcell's *The Indian Queen* was that the music conveys nothing about the setting and that, 'the action might be taking place in St James's Park' (1937: 142). This would suggest that Purcell's work predates the attempts to create

musical colour to characterise the alien, the foreign or the exotic. Space does not permit a detailed discussion of how the musical expression of the Orient or the (foreign or Oriental) Other evolved from the time of Purcell to the mid nineteenth century with works such as Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalilah* (1877) which, as Locke says, has '[an] underlying binary opposition between a morally superior 'us' (or 'collective Self') and an appealing but dangerous 'them' ('collective Other') who come close to causing 'our' downfall' (ed. Scott, 2002: 104).

In her study of British Orientalism and representations of music, Mabilat discusses in detail the issues to which the perceived idea of Orientalism in Britain gave rise within works for the musical stage, fiction and visual culture. In her introduction to British opera in the nineteenth century she quotes from Robinson's *Opera and Ideas* (1985). Mabilat states that 'the works here studied (i.e. within her thesis) are popular musical stage works, and not 'high art' operas' and quotes Robinson as stating that many popular composers apply similar music to all their characters. Robinson's quotation continues, 'a condition which will satisfy us only in certain contexts, such as operetta or musical comedy. We really do not need to have Mabel and Yum-Yum impress us as individually as Verdi heroines' (quoted in Mabilat, 2006: 28).

This is not a statement with which most commentators would take issue, however, one would be unlikely to mistake Mabel's music in *The Pirates of Penzance* for Yum-Yum's in *The Mikado*, yet the songs which Sullivan wrote for each character have their origins in the same stylistic source, namely the operas of Gounod. In the case of Mabel ('Poor wand' ring One'), it is his *valse-arriette* style (the closest parallel seems to be Juliet's aria 'Je veux vivre' from *Roméo et Juliette* (1867 revised 1888). The same composer's essay in pastoral folksong is to be found in 'Le jour se lève' from *Mireille* (1864) for Yum-Yum ('The sun whose rays are all ablaze'). (See Exx.2.14 and 2.15 for a direct comparison of these two songs.)

The point, as Scott says, is that Sullivan 'was very aware of the semiotics of style...in *The Gondoliers* the "Italian" style signifies Italy—this is different from using a style as a common language: there is an element of parody here or, at least, an acknowledgement of cultural specificity' (Scott's emphasis) (2003: 166). In the same way, it could be argued that Sullivan's adoption of Mendelssohn's style in *Iolanthe* for his characterisation of all the females in the opera except Phyllis, who is an Arcadian shepherdess, does not merely indicate a land of fairies, but could be said to signify Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In this context, the land of fairies is treated as the Exotic Other. He is careful to avoid any direct quotation, but he nevertheless makes the connection clear, specifically in the opening chorus of Act 1, drawing on a cultural reference which he would be likely to hold in common with his audience, if only subliminally on their part. In a sense, it was a subtle means of indicating that this comic opera belonged to the same world as Shakespeare's play and not that of burlesque or extravaganza.

Ex.3.23 Mendelssohn, incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Finale from bar 71

Bar 71

Solo

Hand in Hand, mit Fe - en - gunst,

sempre pp

singt und seg - net die - sen Ort!

Tutti

Singt und seg - net die - sen Ort!

Ex.3.24 Sullivan, opening chorus of *Iolanthe* from bar 57

Ladies Chorus

whi - ther, We must dance and we must

sing, Round a - bout our fai - ry ring,

The above passage is the closest to a direct quotation from the earlier source, where the melodic approach to the cadence shows some similarity and Mendelssohn, like Sullivan elsewhere in this example, has the chorus echoing the final phrase of the solo passage.

What Scott identifies here is an essential part of Sullivan's composing technique within the genre of comic opera. Having mentioned both *The Gondoliers* and *Iolanthe*, the concept can be extended to consider other examples such as *Patience*. The opening of Act 1, although it is a passage that does not recur in this exact form, may, for Sullivan, have signified aestheticism (the main theme of the chorus itself does appear several times). Having been used to introduce the first scene, Sullivan would rely on his audience to make the connection when references to it were made subsequently, as in the recitative to Bunthorne's song in Act 1 where the character admits that his aestheticism is a sham and a shortened recollection of this passage appears just before the recitative beginning 'Let me confess!' At the opening of the opera these chords appear in a rising sequence, but for this 'frank confession of the poseur', to use Dunhill's phrase (1928: 89), they appear in a falling sequence ending on an enharmonic chord which acts as the transition to the next section of recitative. This is in the key of A minor of which it is the dominant seventh in its first inversion.

Ex.3.25 (a) *Patience*, introduction to Act 1 from bar 1



(b) *Patience*, recitative to Bunthorne's song from bar 32



Another instance is the opening eight bars of the Overture to *The Yeomen of the Guard* (quoted at Ex.3.3) which is surely meant to *signify* the Tower of London; this is made clear when it is used almost exactly as it appears in the Overture and in the same key, in the introduction to Dame Carruthers' song, which takes the form of a compact history of the Tower. In his later works, such as *The Golden Legend* and *Ivanhoe*, Sullivan adopted a modified form of *idée fixe* technique, more after Berlioz's example than Wagner's. It was used also in *The Yeomen of the Guard* and is referred to above, and there it was a significant unifying element. In *Ivanhoe* Sullivan uses the same technique more consistently with the Normans, the Saxons, Isaac the Jew, the Templar and Ivanhoe being clearly delineated within the music. Sullivan's theme for the aged Isaac, the father of Rebecca, is not particularly distinctive and contains no suggestion of Jewish ethnicity.

Ex.3.26 Sullivan, *Ivanhoe*, recurring theme for Isaac the Jew



However, Rebecca is characterised by the following theme that is introduced in her Prayer, 'Lord of our chosen race'. From this point in the opera she is identified by it. In the same way, the Templar is identified by a fragment from the passage in which he declares his love for Rebecca ('O maid of Judah trembling in my arms') and before the scene of the confrontation in her cell where she repulses him by threatening to throw herself down from the battlements. This Scene ends with statement of the refrain of Rebecca's prayer stated on the full orchestra, thus reinforcing the idea of her triumph over her oppressor.

Ex.3.27 *Ivanhoe*, Act 2, Scene 3, Rebecca's Prayer from bar 9

Rebecca
Bar 9

Guard me, Je - ho vah guard me!

Guard me, guard me, Guard

dim.



In this instance, Sullivan was drawing upon an authentic Jewish source as he explained to the critic Hermann Klein. Klein had commented upon the rising and falling phrase used to set the words 'Guard me' (the fourth bar in the passage quoted above) and that he thought 'that nothing could be more distinctively Eastern or even Hebraic in type' (quoted in Jacobs, 1984: 328). Sullivan went on to comment as follows:

That may well be so...The phrase...you especially refer to is not strictly mine. Let me tell you where I heard it. When I was the Mendelssohn Scholar and living at Leipzig, I went once or twice to the old Jewish synagogue, and among the many eastern melodies chanted by the minister, this quaint progression in the minor occurred so frequently that I have never forgotten it (quoted in Jacobs, 1984: 328).

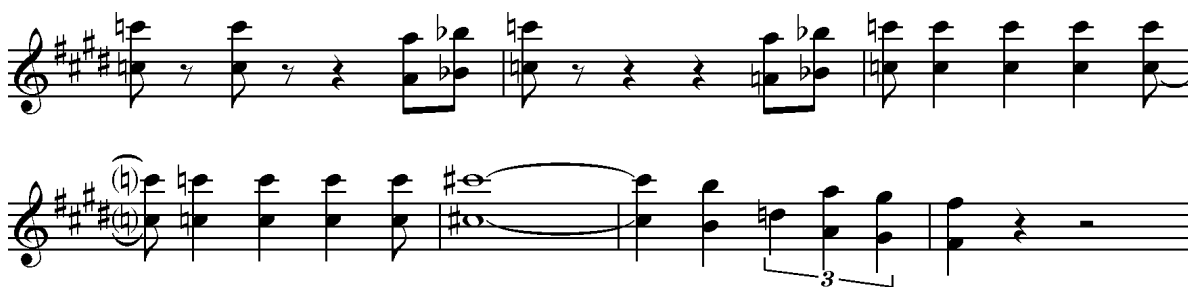
In the case of the Templar, his song rises to a passionate climax as shown here:

Ex.3.28 (a) *Ivanhoe*, Templar's Song, Act 2, Scene 2, from bar 36

A musical score for a vocal line in G minor (three flats) and 4/4 time. The vocal line consists of two staves. The first staff has three measures: '(bride) I will woo her, I will win her, I will woo and win' (first measure), followed by two measures with triplets. The second staff continues the melody with a long note and a triplet. The lyrics are: '(bride) I will woo her, I will win her, I will woo and win her, as the li - on woos and wins!'. The score includes triplets and a long note in the first staff, and a triplet in the second staff.

In the introduction to the confrontation between Rebecca and the Templar that follows her Prayer, the above phrase is used in a modified form, possibly to suggest some apprehension on the Templar's part and doubts as to his likely success.

(b) *Ivanhoe*, introduction to the duet in Act 2, Scene 3 from bar 3



This was a technique that Sullivan had, to some extent adopted in *The Golden Legend*, with the Devil, Prince Henry and Elsie accorded their own thematic identity. Yet Sullivan makes a musical distinction between the Devil's appearance as a character within the drama and the (supernatural) power he represents which is also identified with Prince Henry's illness and which is its source. He also characterises some features of the plot that are impersonal, such as the Salerno doctors' prescription. Here the Lisztian chromaticism of the Prologue is treated as the alien element and recurs with the subsequent references to Prince Henry's malady. In Scott's terms, (see above) it is the signifier of the dark powers in the same way that the 'Italian' style in *The Gondoliers* signified Italy. This has the effect of reinforcing the impression that *The Golden Legend* is far closer to opera than oratorio with its clear parallels to the Faust story that has been such a fruitful source for operatic composition. (The various techniques used by Sullivan in this work are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.) Table 3 below shows the works in which Sullivan is called upon to characterise the exotic or the alien:

TABLE 3 Works by Sullivan in which the exotic is evoked

While the works in the above table all contain elements that can be broadly categorised as exotic or alien, it has been demonstrated that Sullivan could choose to treat any idea *as* exotic or alien, whether it be aestheticism or a land of fairies. It is the factor that, in dramatic terms, disrupts the *status quo*, represented in *Patience* by the Dragoons and in *Iolanthe* by the House of Peers, or so it would seem. In *Patience* the lovesick maidens are presented at the beginning of Act 1 in an Arcadian landscape. Accordingly, the audience accept this as the *status quo* that is disrupted by the arrival of the Dragoons in uniforms in primary colours and with music of a brash military style. As the opera progresses, however, it becomes clear that it is aestheticism that is the alien element and by the end of the opera, all the principal characters have abandoned it except Bunthorne.

Gilbert adopts the same technique in his next opera, *Iolanthe*, where it is the fairies that are presented first and by the end of the first act they have effectively overcome the House of Peers by sponsoring Strephon as a prospective Member of Parliament. The second act culminates in the

reversing of the fairy law that states that any fairy that marries a mortal incurs death and the entire cast fly off to fairyland. Here it is the exotic, disruptive factor that has prevailed and not the commonplace, whereas at the end of *Patience* it is the commonplace which is celebrated with Grosvenor's abandonment of his aestheticism and all the maidens following his example, to the joy of the Dragoons.

In *The Yeomen of the Guard* it is Jack Point and Elsie who are the aliens amid the closed community of the Tower. For the chorus which is sung at their entrance, 'Here's a man of jollity! Jibe, joke, jollify!' Sullivan adopts a musical style that makes this abundantly clear. The use of single bars of 5/4 time within what is otherwise a regular common time rhythmic structure may have its origin in the motif which Sullivan devised for the Devil in *The Golden Legend* which is quoted in Chapter 4 at Ex.4.5, and where he uses the same device, but the Devil had a slower gait. The effect within the opera is deliberately unsettling, communicating to the listener Point's and Elsie's emotions as they are surrounded by a crowd who threaten violence if their entertainment does please them, 'If you vapour vapidity, river runneth rapidly, Into it we fling Bird who doesn't sing!' Here Sullivan seems to anticipate the twentieth century, almost as far as Britten's *Borough*, with a modal (F Lydian) insistence on the fourth of the scale and the use of an irregular metre. (After the vocal section ends, the orchestra repeat much of the material in G Lydian as underscoring for the dialogue.) Hughes remarks that, 'This curious little piece with its strongly modal flavour and frequent changes of time (3/4, 4/4, 5/4) seems to belong more to the world of Vaughan Williams' *Hugh the Drover* than to that of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Merryman and his Maid*' (Hughes, 1960: 68).

Ex.3.29 *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Act 1, 'Here's a man of jollity' from bar 7

Bar 7

Voices with orchestra
sopranos

Here's a man of jol - it - ty,

altos

Jibe, joke, jol - if - fy! Give us of your qual - i - ty, Come fool, fol - li - fy!

At the time when Sullivan was working as organist at Covent Garden in the early 1860s, it was the policy of the house to include a ballet of about half an hour's length that would be written or assembled to order in cases where the opera itself contained no ballet. In 1864 Sullivan was asked to provide a *divertissement* at the end of Bellini's *La Sonnambula*; the result was *L'Île Enchantée*, much of which was later reworked for inclusion in *Victoria and Merrie England* (1897). As the title suggests, Sullivan was called upon to depict an enchanted island, but compared to, say, *Iolanthe*, the music sounds under-characterised. Before it was re-used in 1897, Sullivan had included five numbers from it in the ballet which had been required for *Thespis* at the Gaiety Theatre at Christmas 1871, since, 'In common with all mock opera-bouffes, an interpolated ballet allowed the theatre's professional dancers to show off their legs. (Tillett, 1992: Notes to CD, Marco Polo 8.223460) It is unlikely that he took either of these projects very seriously and the music was transferred without difficulty from the enchanted isle to Mount Olympus where *Thespis* was set.

In the case of his setting of Shelley's Arabian Love Song, as with the introduction to Act 1 of *The Mikado*, the effect is more middle European than middle Eastern. The percussive effect of the double pedal with syncopation and the use of the interval of the augmented second in the ritornello provide the necessary descriptive shading, but in these early examples of Sullivan's attempts to depict the exotic, Scott's 'cultural specificity' referred to above, is conspicuous by its absence.

Ex.3.30 Song 'Arabian Love Song', piano ritornello



This can be attributed in part to the composer's lack of experience, but also to the fact that unlike the Italian dance rhythms which Sullivan could utilise in *The Gondoliers*, or the characteristic melodic features of Jewish chant, there was no recognised source for the rhythmic and melodic gestures appropriate to an individual exotic setting. This often gave rise to an imitation of earlier attempts and Said's complaint quoted by Scott in the first paragraph of this section.

Other early examples, comparable to the Shelley setting, are identified by Young who says, referring to it, that

The character of this item runs through a number of exotic pieces, like the quick dance in *Kenilworth* and the 'Moresque' in *On Shore and Sea*, and the interaction between song and dance is revealed in the rhythmic accompaniment in such songs as 'The moon in silent brightness', 'Sad memories' and the 'Venetian Serenade'. In these songs atmosphere is created by allusion. In others [,] definite description, more or less discreet, is introduced (1971: 73-74).

These examples are all comparatively slight, and unlike the 'Arabian Love Song' which is among the most satisfying of Sullivan's songs outside his stage works, they are not examples of the best of his early music.

One is forced to the conclusion that, in this matter, Sullivan adopted the philosophy of Humpty Dumpty in Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* in that, for him 'the exotic' meant whatever he chose it to mean ("When I use a word" Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.") (Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*, 1998: 190). Within the context of the comic operas, in a significant number of cases, the drama was often created by the incursion of an outside element or character(s) into a close-knit group or community and Sullivan would use a contrast of musical styles to portray this. Although the examples discussed above show how this can be varied, such as the different outcomes at the end of *Patience* and *Iolanthe* discussed above.

This supports the truth of Scott's statement quoted above, that Sullivan's keen awareness of the semiotics of style was a significant factor in his approach to providing music for Gilbert's libretti, but he was prepared to use a wide variety of stylistic approaches, not confined to national, regional or even temporal models. 'Cultural specificity' in his case was considerably broader than the original context (Sullivan's use of Italian dance rhythms in *The Gondoliers*) might suggest. Sullivan's use of parody as part of his approach would seem to support this contention, but its use was rarely of any dramatic significance or a part of Sullivan's technique of characterisation. For example, the use of Gounod's florid vocal style for Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance* is incidental both to the dramatic content and her character. The same could be said of the duet for Ruth and Frederic in Act 1, where Verdi's style is strongly suggested.

One exception, however, is Ruth's song early in the first Act which is, in fact, a parody of the Habanera from Act 2 of Bizet's *Carmen*. Ruth was intended to be 'a blatant parody of the glamorous and fatal Bohemian girl. She emulates the current mezzo-soprano operatic Spanish gypsy' (Jefferson, 1984:91). It was anticipated that she would be played by a younger actress than the usual, somewhat matronly, contralto who became associated with such roles. In this case the performing tradition, which was fostered by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, largely obscured this intention, but Sullivan's use of a repeated rhythmic pattern within song, particularly in the

accompaniment, as Bizet also does, makes the derivation clear. Jefferson calls it 'a club-footed Habanera' (1984: 76) and the two opening phrases are given below for comparison.

Ex.3.31 (a) and (b) Bizet *Carmen*, Act 2, the Habanera from bar 1 and Ruth's song from *The Pirates of Penzance*, Act 1 from bar 1

(a)

Carmen *p*

L'amour

pp

est un oi-seau re-be-le Que nul ne peut ap-pri-voi-ser. Et c'est

(b)

Allegro Pesante

Ruth

Bar 5

When Fred 'ric was a lit-tle lad He proved so brave and dar-ing

p

Unlike Saint-Saëns, for whom other cultures had a great fascination and which had a direct impact on his music (*Suite Algérienne* (1880) and Piano Concerto No.5, *L'égyptien* (1896) are two examples), Sullivan regarded the depiction of the oriental or exotic merely as one of the devices at his disposal when writing the music that was required of him in a given dramatic situation or for a particular occasion. However, there is nothing to suggest that it had any deeper significance for him, despite his being an enthusiastic traveller and, as has been shown, this approach meant that

almost any stylistic feature could be treated as though it were alien if the circumstances appeared to demand it. This is consonant with his view of composing as essentially a craft in which one should strive for the highest standards of workmanship when writing whatever is required. This was an attitude that was much misunderstood during his lifetime and, as will be seen, had an adverse effect on his posthumous reputation.

3.3 Sullivan and his use of the Chromatic Idiom

Within the tradition of English music there has always been a tendency towards harmonic boldness. This can be observed in the consort music of the sixteenth century by composers such as John Jenkins (1592—1678) and Giovanni Coperario (John Cooper) (1570—1626), Purcell's (1659—95) String Fantasias and Sonatas and the concertos written by English composers after the Italian manner of Corelli (1653—1713) and Geminiani (1687—1762). This is also true of the choral repertoire. As a Chapel Royal chorister Sullivan would have sung many works from the post-reformation period onwards where this quality is often to be found. The means used to achieve the effect were often deceptively simple, such as this passage from Byrd's (1543—1623) setting of the *Venite*, where the tonal uncertainty created by the uses of both F sharp and F natural leading to and then following a chord of G major in root position is decidedly arresting.

Ex.3.32 Byrd, extract from the setting of the *Venite*

The image displays a musical score for a two-part setting of the *Venite* by Thomas Byrd. The score is written for Decani (left) and Cantoris (right) voices. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "In his hand are all the corners of the earth; and the strength of the hills is his also". The music features a mix of whole, half, and quarter notes, with some chromatic movement in the Cantoris part. The Decani part is primarily composed of whole and half notes, while the Cantoris part includes more rhythmic variation with quarter and eighth notes.

Purcell was also noted for an approach to harmony and tonality that at times verged on the cavalier. His anthem 'Remember not, Lord, our offences' begins in the key of A minor. There are several chromatic touches and the approach to the cadence in C major is preceded six beats earlier by a chord of C minor in root position. There then follows this homophonic passage that closes in F major. The first and second full bars of the extract below are notable for the unorthodox treatment of the dissonances and the close proximity of both C sharp and C natural in the second bar followed by a succession of discords in the third bar which are resolved only at the cadence, where even the

approach to the seventh chord is decidedly unusual, being by leap to an unprepared dissonance. This is almost immediately followed by another cadence in G minor, but with a sharpened third. The entire work is only 44 bars in length, yet after the close on the G major chord, Purcell still contrives to end on an A major chord with a suspended fourth. His harmonic methods may seem somewhat rough, yet the effect on the listener is to heighten the expression of the penitential text that Purcell is setting.

Ex.3.33 Purcell, 'Remember not, Lord, our offences' from bar 29

Samuel Sebastian Wesley, another former Chapel Royal chorister, took an equally forthright attitude in harmonic and tonal matters and often used modulations in sequence to create an overwhelming sense of climax. One such strikingly climactic passage occurs in the fugal section of what is probably his most famous organ piece, *Choral Song*. The fugal section ranges widely through a succession of keys with much use of sequential writing, finally coming to rest on an extended chord of C sharp major in root position. Bearing in mind that the tonic key is ostensibly C major, this appears to be something of an *impasse*. However, with superb effrontery, Wesley follows it with a chord of the dominant seventh in G major in its first inversion as a preparation for a second inversion chord in the tonic key leading to the coda.

Ex.3.34 S.S. Wesley, *Choral Song* for organ, from bar 131

The work was written in 1842 as one of the Three Pieces for Chamber Organ. There is some evidence that the fugue may have started as an improvisation, later written down, possibly only in sketch form, which perhaps explains the tonal freedom of the writing, but it is also possible that

Wesley adapted the work depending on the organ upon which he was playing, whether with or without pedals, since, during this period, these could not be assumed.

This extract from his setting of *The Wilderness* is more disciplined. Here he is attempting to express the emotions felt at the final return of the exiles. The combination of the series of modulations with the emphasis on the word 'return' makes this passage particularly effective.

Ex.3.35 S.S. Wesley *The Wilderness*, excerpt from bar 363

Doubled by organ

ff

And the ran-som'd of the Lord shall re-turn, and come to Zi - on with

ff

And the ran-som'd of the Lord shall re-turn, and come to Zi - on with

ff

And the ran-som'd of the Lord shall re-turn, and come to Zi - on with

ff

And the ran-som'd of the Lord shall re-turn, and come to Zi - on with

songs and e-ver-last-ing joy up - on their heads, their heads._____

songs and e-ver-last-ing joy up - on their heads, their heads._____

songs and ev - er - last-ing joy up - on their heads, their heads._____

songs and ev - er - last-ing joy up - on their heads, their heads._____

As an intelligent musical child singing within the surroundings of the Chapel Royal, Sullivan would have absorbed everything that was placed before him and his earliest efforts at composition were written for the Chapel choir and performed there. His earliest published work for chorus and orchestra was *The Masque at Kenilworth* (1864), written to a libretto by H.F. Chorley and first performed in Birmingham in September 1864. In the Introduction, there occurs this unusual harmonic progression at bar 4.

Ex.3.36 *The Masque at Kenilworth*, extract from the Introduction from bar 49

The musical score for Ex.3.36 is in 3/4 time. It begins in the tonic key of C major. In the second measure, it shifts to E minor, indicated by the key signature change (one flat). The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the Violin and Flute parts, which play a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second system shows the Oboe and Flute parts, which play a more complex, chromatic line. The bass line consists of a steady eighth-note pattern.

The extract begins in the tonic key of C major, but in the following bar slips into E minor in its second inversion and then also hints at the diminished seventh chord. This gives way to a chord of the minor seventh based on A, moving by a leap of an augmented fourth to a chord of the dominant seventh on E flat as an approach to the key of A flat major. These rapid, not to say peremptory, modulations might suggest a degree of technical insecurity in tonal matters at this early stage in Sullivan's career. Hughes cites the following bars from *The Martyr of Antioch* as being indicative of the same problem (Hughes, 1960: 65).

Ex.3.37 *The Martyr of Antioch*, No.8 from bar 151

The musical score for Ex.3.37 is in 3/4 time. It features a vocal line for MARGARITA and CALLIAS, and a piano accompaniment. The key signature changes from C major to E minor in the second measure. The vocal line for CALLIAS includes the lyrics: "Be - hold in yon - der space thy King en - throned". The piano accompaniment is marked *f con forza* and features a complex, chromatic line with many accidentals. The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the vocal line for MARGARITA and CALLIAS. The second system shows the piano accompaniment.

Some 16 years separate *The Masque at Kenilworth* (1864) and *The Martyr of Antioch* (1880), yet Sullivan was still capable of producing this somewhat amateurish fumbling when dealing with chromatic key relationships. At this comparatively early stage the problem was likely to be more a question of acquiring consistency in technique. His early exposure to the repertoire of English choral music would be bound to influence his earliest attempts at composition, and he would

naturally be drawn to some examples of Wesley's more dramatic strokes, but complete technical assurance would only come with experience.

Elsewhere Sullivan showed that he had acquired the confidence to use such tonal relationships expressively. The cantata *On Shore and Sea* was first performed in May 1871 and it was only Sullivan's third work for chorus, soloists and orchestra, his first oratorio *The Prodigal Son* (1869) having followed *The Masque at Kenilworth*. The eighth number is entitled 'Chorus of Christian Captives' and contains this passage where Sullivan exploits the enharmonic relationship between C sharp and D flat. Unlike the excerpt from *Patience* quoted at Ex.3.25 (b), this is not being employed as a transitional harmonic pivot. It is being used expressively to depict the uncertainty felt by the prisoners, wondering whether their bid for freedom will be successful. Sullivan's handling of the tonal considerations is much more assured than in either of the quotations given above; the enharmonic changes do not, in fact, undermine an underlying sense of tonality, unlike the passage from *The Martyr of Antioch*, which has little, if any, sense of key and gives the impression that Sullivan was uncertain of the tonal direction in which the music was progressing.

At the end of this section Sullivan restores the tonal balance, as it were, by the skilful use of a tonic pedal combined with dissonances that ultimately resolve to the tonic key of D flat major. This is an extraordinarily powerful climax for the full orchestra, with the prominent tenor line, with its *sforzandi*, given to the trombones. The tenor part is also of interest because it forms a mirror-image of the treble line and although the passage is resolved by a perfect cadence, the combination of the tonic pedal with the two converging melodic lines increases the harmonic tension still further and this is only relaxed with an extended resolution on the tonic of D flat major with a carefully graduated diminuendo.

Ex.3.38 *On Shore and Sea*, conclusion of Chorus of Christian Captives from bar 42

Tenors and Basses
pp

Pass the word, my bro - thers, pass it light and low,

Oars will break to wea - pons, chains will weight a blow;

conclusion of movement from bar 64

and we are free.

ff

sf

sf

sf

An example from the stage works of Sullivan applying a similar technique in using enharmonic chromaticism to heighten emotion is in the coda to the song 'Red of the Rosebud' from Act 1 of *Haddon Hall*. Here the main protagonist, Dorothy Vernon, is anticipating her elopement with her lover John Manners with the song ending exultantly with the words 'I love my love, and my love loves me'. The coda is marked *un poco più vivo* at bar 96 after the second verse.

Ex.3.39 Haddon Hall, Act 1 'Red of the Rosebud' from bar 96

2.
un poco più vivo

2. Red of the rose - bud, White haw-thorn

bush, Breast of the ro - bin, Song of the thrush

In the passage from *On Shore and Sea* Sullivan seems to anticipate the device of reserving the strongest dissonances for the coda, also to be found in works such as Balfour Gardiner's *Evening Hymn* (1908). Here the perfect cadence ushers in the harmonic climax of the piece on the word 'Amen', using the augmented unison combined with the minor seventh, at the eighth bar of the excerpt given below and followed by a gradual diminuendo. Like Sullivan, Gardiner also uses the device of a tonic pedal to restore some tonal stability after the previous uncertainty. This is the organ part that doubles the voices throughout and makes clear the harmonic sequence.

Ex.3.40 H. Balfour Gardiner, conclusion of *Evening Hymn*, organ part from bar 70

molto **f** **ff**



Sullivan's forceful conclusion almost sounds out of place, as though it belongs to a work of much greater significance than this rather slight, picturesque secular cantata. This is a feature also to be found in the incidental music to *The Tempest*, where the orchestral climax in the Prelude to Act 5 would not sound inappropriate in a large-scale symphonic work. The Finale to the first act of *The Mikado* at Katisha's dramatic entrance is another instance. As Hughes remarks of this passage, 'the harmonic interest is splendidly maintained, and this scene would not be out of place in *Aida*' (Hughes, 1960: 54). This specific problem, if problem it was, became acute when *Ruddigore* was produced at the Savoy Theatre in January 1887. It was felt both by the critics and the audience that the contrast in mood between the two acts was too marked, the music for the supernatural episode being too reminiscent of grand opera to form a convincing part of a comic one.

Gilbert recognised this, and Baily quotes a letter from him where he explains his view:

My own impression is that the first act led everyone to believe that the piece was going to be bright and cheery throughout, and that the audience were not prepared for the solemnity of the ghost music. That music seems to my uninstructed ear to be very fine indeed, but—out of place in a comic opera. It is as though one inserted fifty lines of *Paradise Lost* into a farcical comedy. I had hoped that the scene would have been treated more humorously by Sullivan, but I fancy he thought his professional position demanded something grander and more impressive than the words suggested. (Baily, 1967: 296)

This rapid shift by Sullivan from the frivolous to the serious can be detected in his first stage work, *Cox and Box* (1866), where the eighth number is entitled 'Romance', which is an account given by Box to Cox as to how he falsely contrived his own suicide to avoid an unwanted marriage and takes the form of a mock-operatic *scena*. This passage is in the key of G minor, but Sullivan moves to a chord of the augmented sixth to increase the dramatic tension. The use of chromaticism here is a self-consciously humorous acknowledgement of a stock device used to denote a rise in the dramatic temperature, particularly in opera. The sequence lasts for 16 bars, 4 bars for each degree of the chromatic scale between G flat and A natural.

Ex.3.41 Cox and Box 'Romance' from bar 141

Heard the wild sea-gull's mourn-ful cry, Look'd all a-round, there was no-bo-dy nigh;

None but I on the cliff so high, And all save the sea was bare and dry: And I

In his second full-length collaboration with Gilbert, Sullivan had to characterise the supernatural and it is instructive to compare how he approached the task earlier in his career. Having only written *Thespis* in 1871 and the one act *Trial by Jury* (1875), no real precedents had been set and *The Sorcerer* (1877), more than the others in the series, shows signs of its origins in the older tradition of opera, specifically *L'Elisir d'Amore* by Donizetti and Weber's *Der Freischütz* and Gilbert uses elements of the plots from both works. In the Incantation (No.13 in the vocal score) that precedes the Finale to the first act, Sullivan draws on the Wolf's Glen Scene from Weber's opera.

The scoring is for low wind and brass and opens with an undulating six-note semiquaver figure. The response of the invisible chorus of spirits is followed by a rapid chromatic scale. The spell being cast by Wells is complete when the three phials have been emptied into the teapot, with flashes and delicate figures for the woodwind and choral interjections after each one. This clearly mimics the casting of the magic bullets in Weber's opera and Sullivan further follows Weber's example by breaking into compound time at the words, 'Hark! Hark! They assemble these fiends of the night!', as Weber does between the casting of the fourth and fifth bullets and using similar figuration. The relevant passage from Weber's opera is given below followed by the short section from the Incantation from Act 1 of Sullivan's opera.

Ex.3.42 (a) Weber, *Der Freischütz*, Act 2, Wolf's Glen Scene, the interlude between the casting of the fourth and fifth magic bullets from bar 320

Vier! Vier!
Four! (echo) Four!

Caspar (counts fearfully): (Rattling of wheels, cracking of whips,
fp *ff* and trampling of horses are heard. Four wheels darting fire roll across the stage.)

The musical score for Ex.3.42 (a) consists of three systems of music. The first system shows a vocal line for Caspar with lyrics 'Vier! Four! (echo)' and 'Vier! Four!'. Below the vocal line is a piano accompaniment with triplets and dynamic markings *fp* and *ff*. The second system continues the piano accompaniment with triplets. The third system shows a vocal line with lyrics 'mas - ter, we are here!' and a piano accompaniment with triplets and a *dim.* marking.

(b) *The Sorcerer*, Act 1, Incantation Scene from bar 47

Chorus

Good

Orchestra

mas - ter, we are here!

dim.

The musical score for Ex.3.42 (b) consists of two systems of music. The first system shows a vocal line for the Chorus with lyrics 'Good' and an orchestral accompaniment. The second system shows a vocal line with lyrics 'mas - ter, we are here!' and an orchestral accompaniment. The vocal line has a *dim.* marking.

Piu vivo Alexis

Hark! hark! they as - sem - ble,

Piu vivo

Aline

These fiends of the night! Oh, Al - lex - is, I

tre - mble! Seek safe - ty in flight!

As in the Prologue of *The Golden Legend* and the relevant parts of the second act of *Ruddigore*, the Incantation Scene is set apart from the rest of the opera by the composer's use of the chromatic style. The contrast between it and the compound-time dance measure that begins the Finale is almost blatant, but effectively highlights the idea that the supernatural has broken into what is otherwise a Pastoral. Earlier in the opera this is hinted at in the middle section of the song given to Wells where he introduces both himself and his professional skills. The Incantation is specifically referred to at the words 'He can raise you hosts of ghosts' with a suggestion of the appropriately tortuous harmony. Sullivan here uses the chord of the seventh in its first inversion of the flattened supertonic at the words, 'and that without reflectors' on the underlined word. It is also interesting that Wells' list of supernatural items recalls some of the horrors of the relevant scene in Weber's opera, as does Sir Roderic's song in the second act of *Ruddigore*.

Ex.3.43 *The Sorcerer*, Act 1, song for Wells, the middle section from beginning

He can raise you hosts Of ghosts, And that, with-out re - flec - tors; And

cree - py things With wings, And gaunt and gris - ly spec - tres; He can fill you crowds of

shrouds, And hor - ri - fy you vast - ly; He can rack your brains With

chains, And gib - ber - ings grim and ghastr - ly!

Elsewhere in the comic operas Sullivan tends to use the chromatic idiom to give touches of colour within what is basically a diatonic harmonic structure. The interludes between the verses in Patience's first song are entirely typical.

Ex.3.44 *Patience*, Act 1, interlude between the verses of Patience's song



Since Sullivan was writing within the genre of comic opera it followed that significant parts of his joint works with Gilbert would follow convention in terms of structure, language, both literary and musical and dramaturgy. Where they would differ would be in the exploitation of the absurd (the treating of trivial matters with the utmost seriousness), satire and parody. Thus, it is not surprising to find that much of the musical language of the comic operas would not have been out of place in any musical work of the period. Sullivan's approach to such matters as passing notes, suspensions and the resolution of dissonances is usually entirely unexceptionable, although this co-existed with a capacity to surprise both in choice of harmonic colour and sometimes emotional intensity, as shown above. This somewhat recalls a similar duality to be found in S.S. Wesley's music, where boldness and experimentation can be found beside very conventional writing just as Wesley's character seems to have been a blend of both the innovative and the conservative, such as his resistance to the adoption of equal temperament for keyboard instruments, despite a reverence for the music of J.S. Bach.

From time to time Sullivan's choice of chromatic harmony is intended to give added point to the words, such as in this extract from the opening chorus of *Princess Ida*, where there is an unexpected move to the flattened supertonic in its second inversion to indicate the unpleasant character of King Gama. (See also Ex.3.41 above)

Ex.3.45 *Princess Ida* Act 1, opening chorus from bar 108

When not attempting to portray the macabre, as in the Prologue to *The Golden Legend* or the second act of *Ruddigore*, Sullivan's use of the diminished seventh chord is often as a preparation for the dominant seventh, a point noted by Hughes, where the diminished seventh chord rises to the dominant seventh, as in this passage from the duet in the first act of *Ruddigore* (Hughes, 1960: 49).

Ex.3.46 *Ruddigore* Act 1, duet, conclusion of verse

Rose Robin Rose Robin

Poor lit-le man! Poor lit-le maid! Poor lit-le man! Poor lit-le maid!

However, he also notes how Sullivan varied his approach at the end of the introduction to the second act of *The Mikado*, where the diminished seventh chord *falls* to the dominant seventh (*) as opposed to rising and the emotional impact is quite different.

Ex.3.47 *The Mikado*, introduction to Act 2, 6 bars before the vocal entry

In the quotation from *Ruddigore* the couple concerned are pursuing a courtship, hampered by a crippling shyness, described by Hughes as being in 'a mood half humorous, half tender'. At the beginning of the second act of *The Mikado*, Yum-Yum, the bride, is being prepared for her wedding day and the atmosphere is one of excited anticipation, which Sullivan captures by the simplest of means, repeating the seventh chord based on G with its accents in the top voice and then subsiding on to the dominant seventh chord which is preceded from above by the diminished seventh.

Elsewhere in the operas Sullivan was equally adept at using chromaticism expressively, as here at the end of the duet for Richard and Rose in Act 1 of *Ruddigore*, the sinister associations of the idiom being more fully explored later. However, it is again the chord of the flattened supertonic, this time in its first inversion, but without the seventh, which is used for expressive purposes, not, as in the examples from *The Sorcerer* or *Princess Ida* above, to delineate a darker characterisation, but to express tenderness and sentiment, but without descending to sentimentality. At bar 12 of the extract, Sullivan's use of the augmented unison is of interest, since again he seems to reserve his use of the strongest dissonance for the coda. This may be compared to the earlier quotations from *On Shore and Sea* and Balfour Gardiner's *Evening Hymn* above, Exx.3.38 and 39.

Ex.3.48, *Ruddigore*, Act 1, extract from the duet for soprano and tenor, the final 14 bars

love! And thou and I, love, Shall live and

love! And thou and I, love, Shall live and

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

die, love, With-out a sigh, love,

die, love, With-out a sigh, love,

My own, my love!

My own, my love!

pp Ped. *

Sullivan spent most of the spring and summer of 1886 composing *The Golden Legend* for the Leeds Festival, which took place in the October of that year. Immediately afterwards he had to compose, under some pressure, the music for *Ruddigore*, which was first performed on 22 January 1887.

Therefore, a relationship between the two works is both easily discernible and unsurprising. Sullivan had used what would have been regarded as ‘an advanced’ chromatic idiom to characterise the malign supernatural element of Longfellow’s poem which is also associated with Prince Henry’s illness. In Act 2 of *Ruddigore* he adapts this style somewhat for the appearance of the ghostly ancestors and specifically Sir Roderic’s song ‘When the night wind howls’. The introduction is based, conventionally, on a chord of the diminished seventh followed by a chromatic scale and although it is undoubtedly effective, it is perhaps of less interest than Sullivan’s assured use of unusual tonal relationships within the song itself. This is shown in the Table below.

Gilbert’s point about the scene being treated with a seriousness which seemed less than entirely appropriate to the comic opera genre is illustrated by the metre of Sir Roderic’s song which suggests that Gilbert had in mind something more akin to the Lord Chancellor’s song in the second act of *Iolanthe*, where again the unearthly (on this occasion the visions encountered in a nightmare) is described with a humour which is matched by the composer. On this occasion, Sullivan decided to depart from metrical precedent, probably to avoid the suggestion of having repeated himself and this aspect is discussed fully in 1.7 in the context of typology. With *The Golden Legend* still very much in his mind, he turns the experience to account by adapting the idiom for use in comic opera. Within bars five to sixteen he moves smoothly from the tonic of D minor to the remote key of A flat major, which becomes the tonal pivot to allow an equally smooth return to the dominant seventh of the tonic, as he does in *Patience* quoted at Ex.3.25.

Table 4 A representation of Sullivan’s tonal scheme for the verse of Sir Roderic Murgatroyd’s song in Act 2 of *Ruddigore*

BARS	HARMONY
1 to 5	Introduction, diminished 7th based on D sharp, a chromatic scale followed by a full close in D minor
5 to 9	D minor
9 to 11	C major
12 to 16	A flat major
17	enharmonic change of A flat to G sharp
18 to 20	dominant 7th in D minor
21	interrupted cadence in D minor
22	B flat/F augmented
23	B flat to an augmented 6th chord, to the
24	dominant in D minor, to an augmented 6th based on A flat to
25	G with a suspended 4th [C] to B natural, then B flat, a minor 7th chord based on G to a
26	dominant 7th in the tonic, followed by the tonic major, then tonic minor to a
27	7th chord on the supertonic to a dominant 7th chord to a
28	full close in the tonic.

This entire scene is stylistically self-contained within the second act, in the same way as the Prologue to *The Golden Legend* and the tonal colouring sets them apart from the rest of the work. In the case of the opera, the song discussed above has a style of its own, subtly different from the

choruses which frame it, where Sullivan, writing for 3 or 4-part male chorus, fully exploits the darker colours of the tenor and bass voices, but also writes in both unison and octaves, employing in this passage the Dorian mode which adds an effective unearthly flavour to the writing to depict the appearance of the ancestors.

Ex.3.49 Sullivan, excerpt from the Chorus of Ancestors, Act 2 No.4 of *Ruddigore*, bars 26 to 33

Each from his ac - cus- tomed place_ Steps in - to the world once more!

In the passage leading to the climax of this introductory section, Sullivan writes for both orchestra and voices in octaves, using a scale of his own devising,¹³ outlining the tritone, with its diabolical associations, first between A flat and D and then between C and F sharp and closes, with terrifying effect, on a chord F sharp major, at which point the orchestra plays full chords in stark contrast to the sparse texture of the previous six bars.

Ex.3.50 *Ruddigore*, Act 2, Chorus of Ancestors from bar 62

Tenors
Set up - on thy course of e - vil Lest the King of

Basses
Set up - on thy course of e - vil Lest the King of

Orchestra
ff

¹³ This would seem to consist of the opening fifth of the Phrygian mode (or pentachord), beginning on G, followed by a fragment of the octatonic scale based on C, where the notes ascend in alternating intervals of a tone and semitone.

Spec - tre - Land Set on thee his gris - ly

Spec - tre - Land Set on thee his gris - ly

ff

hand!

ff

hand!

Sullivan's most extended exercise in the chromatic idiom is to be found in *The Golden Legend* and this is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. It is of interest at present to compare it with his music for *Ruddigore*, which was at least planned at the same time as that of the cantata if not actually written, and study it for signs of some of the same techniques but tailored to the more compact form of the opera. Sullivan had already achieved something similar in the Incantation of *The Sorcerer*, where, while drawing on Weber's model, he compresses it into a much shorter time-frame, in keeping with the genre. In Weber's opera, the Wolf's Glen Scene is much more extended, there being seven magic bullets to be cast and each is accompanied by the appearance of some terrifying object or portent.

One notable feature of both the Prologue of the cantata and the supernatural scene in *Ruddigore* is Sullivan's use of key relationships linked by the augmented fourth, as shown above where, within three bars, the music moves from C (with a flattened third) to F sharp major. In the opera, Sullivan modifies the very sophisticated technique that he developed when writing the Prologue to the

cantata, where traditional key relationships based on the perfect fifth are all but abandoned. Moreover, much of the harmony is based on the dominant seventh in its second inversion rather than the more hackneyed diminished seventh. The opening of the Prologue (after the initial thematic statement played on the bells) illustrates this. At the fourth bar there is a drop by a semitone and the music continues moving by parallel dominant sevenths in the treble with chromatic scale figures in the bass. These chords are, of course, used in isolation without the context of a tonic, yet contrary to Hughes' assertion that 'one's first impression is one of unsophisticated atonality' (Hughes, 1960: 67), the tonal scheme within the Prologue is actually very tightly organised, but in a far from conventional way.

Ex.3.51 Prologue to *The Golden Legend* from bar 2

The musical score for Ex.3.51 is in 6/8 time and consists of two systems. The first system shows the first two bars, with a treble staff containing a series of eighth-note chords and a bass staff with a chromatic scale figure. The second system shows the next two bars, continuing the chromatic scale in the bass and the eighth-note chords in the treble. The score is marked with 'ff' (fortissimo) and 'fz' (forzando).

Sullivan's view of his own work was essentially practical, almost utilitarian. He shaped his music to the requirements demanded either by the occasion or the context. Elements such as chromatic harmony were simply weapons in his armoury or shades of colour on his palette. He would probably have regarded the development of some sort consistent artistic vision as absurdly pretentious and it would have been entirely foreign to his philosophy, developed when he began to earn his living as a composer, of simply trying to adhere to the highest standards of craftsmanship irrespective of the genre.

Sullivan's early training as a chorister made him familiar with much of the English choral repertoire with its sometimes-surprising harmonic turns and occasional bold strokes and some evidence of this influence is detectable in his earlier compositions. Hughes remarks of instances such as Ex.3.45 and Ex.3.25 (b) that they are 'obvious importations from across the channel' (Hughes, 1960: 65) and a partiality for the chord of the flattened supertonic is evident in some of the examples quoted above. As has been discussed earlier, the French school of opera made a certain appeal to Sullivan and he greatly admired Bizet's *Carmen*, and this seems to have inspired him to acquire some of the French composer's harmonic adroitness.

The intense chromaticism of the Prologue to *The Golden Legend* is almost unique in Sullivan's output, as is the tonal organisation and both features were designed for a specific purpose and for one work only. However, he does somewhat recall it in his last collaboration with Gilbert, *The Grand Duke* (1896), where the subject of the song is psychosomatic illness, 'When you find you're a broken-down critter' (Ex.3.63) and this is discussed in Chapter 4 in the context of the choral work and below in connection with Liszt's possible influence. The chromatic idiom is often a notable feature of Sullivan's music, but it is not defined by it any more than by his treatment of the exotic or his thematic allusiveness in the operas. Sullivan always somehow manages to escape categorisation, and this has contributed to the tendency to regard both the man and his music as being of little account. As Eden says, 'Music criticism...had no way of dealing with such a man except to dismiss him' (Eden, 1986: 162). One of the purposes of this study is to show how unjust such an attitude may be.

3.4 *The Influences of Berlioz and Liszt*

Sullivan's early musical development may be regarded symbolically as a series of three concentric circles; the first was the one closest to him that concerned the repertoire that he sang as a chorister in the Chapel Royal. His earliest attempts at composition, such as the song 'O Israel', unsurprisingly bear the marks of his early contact with the English church music of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. As a young student at the Royal Academy and later at Leipzig he became aware of the wider musical world and the works of Mendelssohn, Schubert and later Schumann, all of whom were to leave indelible traces on his own music and this may be regarded as the second circle. Finally, the third was the music of those composers whose work Sullivan had encountered and admired, perhaps with some reservations, but, save in certain circumstances, did not feel strongly inclined to emulate. These included most notably Wagner, about whose music Sullivan always tended to be ambivalent, but also Berlioz and Liszt.

Hector Berlioz 1803—69

In his diary for 5 March 1881, Sullivan mentions attending a performance of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* but makes no other comment; this may suggest that the work was already reasonably familiar to him. Had it not been, he would be likely to write down his impressions of it, as he does on other occasions, most notably when attending Bayreuth some years later to see for the only time Wagner's *Ring Cycle*. He records in his diary some of his most forthright criticisms, not merely of the performance, but of the work and what he regarded as the uneven quality, particularly of the dramaturgy. In any event, when he came to write *The Golden Legend* in 1886 he gave some clear indications of the influence Berlioz's work seems to have had upon him, although one does not discount Gounod's opera based on the same source, in which he had played at Covent Garden under Costa and which was one of the most popular operas of the time. Yet, it is Berlioz that comes to

mind, particularly in the Prologue and first scene, where the parallels between Longfellow's elaboration of a German legend and Goethe's great work are perhaps closest.

In 3.1 there is a discussion of the indications that suggest that Sullivan may have used or at least have been aware of Berlioz's *Traité d'Orchestration*. In his early Overture *Marmion*, from which an extract is given, Sullivan shows how Berlioz's use of the orchestra informed his own approach, particularly in his use of the brass and wind groups within it. In addition, he would have been in sympathy with Berlioz's admiration for Shakespeare, an enthusiasm he shared, and which was a constant throughout his professional life. Like the older composer, Sullivan tended to favour an episodic design in his oratorios and other choral works such as *The Golden Legend*, which, like Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*, might well have been described as an *opéra de chambre*, complete with stage directions.

Later in Chapter 4 Sullivan's tonal organisation within the Prologue is discussed in detail, where conventional key relationships are almost entirely absent. However, the pitch of the orchestral bells acts almost as a tonal anchor within the movement to which the music must return at regular intervals. In Berlioz's work the *Course à l'Abîme* is described by Primmer as, 'An extreme example of the tonal complexity made possible by Berlioz' (*sic*) expanded musical grammar...' He goes on to say that, 'As one would expect, it is in pieces such as this—Romantic horror pieces, perhaps his most famed though by no means his most common type—that Berlioz brings all his resources into play, creating a tonal cauldron which never goes off the boil' (Primmer, 1973: 75).

It can be argued that in the Prologue, Sullivan, like Berlioz, was bringing all his technical resources into play, at least as far as tonality is concerned, since this was by far his most experimental piece in this respect and one which has tended to be misunderstood, as by Hughes, who refers to a first impression of an 'unsophisticated atonality' (1960: 67). It too can take its place among the 'Romantic horror pieces' like Berlioz's descriptive journey and Weber's Wolf's Glen Scene from *Der Freischütz*, which was another significant influence on Sullivan's early writing for the theatre, in particular *The Sorcerer* (1877) and discussed earlier in 3.3.

Another similar feature is a certain duality observable in both pieces. While Sullivan has the orchestral bells as his fixed tonal point, Berlioz demonstrates 'in a subtle and symbolic way, two tonal usages [that] are opposed to one another in this movement. Whilst Faust and Mephistopheles are caught up in a fast-moving whirlwind of key changes, the chorus of kneeling Christian women remains within the relatively calm ambiance of the tonic key, c minor' (Primmer, 1973: 74–75).

Ex.3.52 Berlioz, *Course à l'Abîme de La Damnation de Faust* from bar 20

Chorus of Peasants (*kneeling at a wayside cross*)
Sopranos and Altos

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line (Sopranos and Altos) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The piano part features a continuous, fast-moving eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more rhythmic, chordal accompaniment in the left hand. The vocal line is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the lyrics: "Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a, o - ra pro no -". The lyrics are spread across the three systems: "Sanc - ta Ma - ri -" in the first system, "a, o -" in the second, and "ra pro no -" in the third.

In the case of Sullivan's Prologue, it is the pitch of the bells (G flat major) that provides the fixed point, but it is not the 'calm ambiance' of the tonic of C minor referred to by Primmer. Here, Mephistopheles and his demons are the ones 'caught up in a fast-moving whirlwind of key changes', arrested only by the utterances of the bells, but which do not bring any form of relief.

The two movements have several features in common; the restless tonality, but with a fixed point; the absence of orthodox key relationships, yet the careful organisation of the tonal considerations which is apparent in both movements. The subject matter is also shared, being the diabolical and therefore justifying the use of the tritone, Berlioz reserving it for use in the final section (bars 90 to

128) where *Pandemonium* is approached. To what extent Sullivan may have regarded this movement as a possible model for his own is open to speculation, but it is likely that his awareness of Berlioz's tonal procedures informed his own. Later, the influence of Liszt, the dedicatee of Berlioz's work, will be assessed and specifically how it contributed to Sullivan's approach when writing this movement.

In the first scene of Sullivan's work and with his first vocal entry, Prince Henry enlarges on the nature of his malady, rather in the same manner as Faust, indeed, in this Scene Longfellow/Bennett most closely approach the Goethe model. At the appearance of Lucifer there is a flash of lightning, depicted by Sullivan by the orchestral wind and he presents the first of his recurring themes, one associated exclusively with Lucifer in his corporeal form. Here Sullivan again appears to be following Berlioz's example, since Berlioz introduces Mephistopheles in a similar way, with an abrupt figure given to the wind instruments, as shown below.

Ex.3.53

(a) Sullivan, *The Golden Legend* Lucifer's appearance in Scene 1

(A flash of lightning, out of which Lucifer appears, in the garb of a travelling Physician)

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system is a piano introduction in 3/4 time, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. It features a rapid, ascending scale in the right hand, followed by a staccato (*stacc.*) figure in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system shows the vocal entry of Lucifer, with the lyrics "All hail, _____ Prince Hen - ry!". The vocal line is in the bass clef, and the piano accompaniment continues in the right and left hands. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand.

(b) Berlioz, *La Damnation de Faust*, first appearance of Méphistophelès

Méphistophelès
(apparaissant brusquement) Récit

Allegro moderato

Ô pure é - mo - ti - on!

suivez

En - fant du saint par - vis!



In the Second Scene Sullivan depicts the heroine Elsie's vision of Christ:

I heard Him call. When Christ ascended
Triumphantly from star to star,
He left the gates of Heaven ajar.
I had a vision in the night
And saw Him standing at the door
Of His Father's mansion, vast and splendid,
And beckoning to me from afar.

Ex.3.54 Sullivan, *The Golden Legend*, Scene 2, from bar 337 to 346

The musical score is for a vocal and piano piece. It is in 4/4 time and the key signature has two flats (B-flat major). The vocal line is written in a single staff, and the piano accompaniment is in two staves. The piano part features a 'P' dynamic marking and the instruction 'sempre staccato'. The vocal line includes the following lyrics: 'When Christ as - cend - ed Tri - umph - ant - ly from star to'. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more complex pattern in the left hand, including a 'Red.' marking.

When

P *sempre staccato*

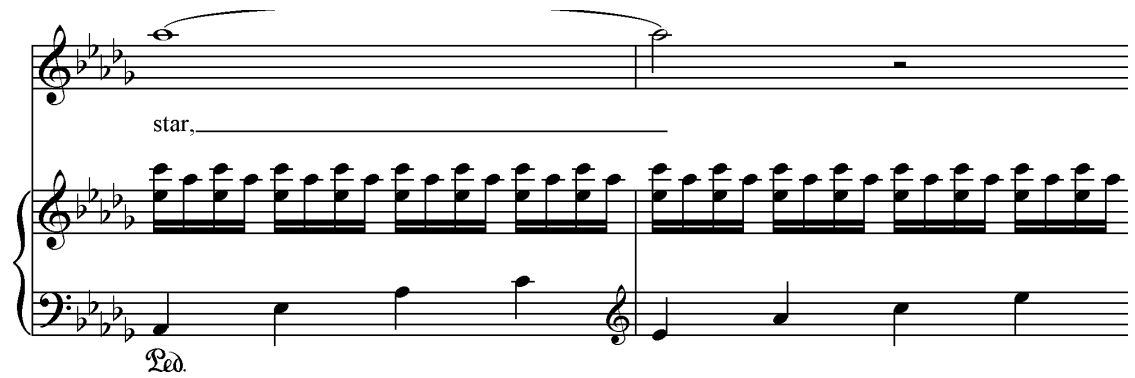
(p)

Red.

Christ as - cend - ed

Tri - umph - ant - ly

from star to



It is this vision that has made her resolve to give her life for that of the Prince. A comparison with the *Apothéose de Marguerite* from the end of *La Damnation de Faust* is instructive. Both passages maintain a constant movement, in Sullivan's case semiquavers from 6 bars before letter P to letter S in the vocal score. In Berlioz's work the semiquaver movement is maintained by the two harps, the second also supplying the outline of the harmony, but not doubled by any other instrument, thus allowing the music to be, as it were, airborne. Sullivan's structure is less elaborate, but as effective. He dispenses with all except implied harmony and, as he is writing an accompaniment to a solo voice, he ensures that it is not overwhelmed. The vocal lines both make distinctive use of a rising arpeggio figure, effectively providing the harmonic context, and the choice of key may also be significant; both passages are in D flat major and there may be a connection with the nineteenth-century idea of a rhetoric of keys. In his book on Berlioz, Rushton points out that, in common with the passage below, the 'Judex Crederis' section of Berlioz's *Le Grand Messe De Morts*, the slow movement of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony and the end of Wagner's *Das Rheingold* all share the same tonality and therefore Sullivan's choice of the same key in this context was unlikely to have been a matter of chance (Rushton, 2001: 142).

Ex.3.55 Berlioz, *Apothéose de Marguerite de La Damnation de Faust*, from the beginning of the movement

Chorus

Moderato Un peu moins lent *p*

SOPRANO 1 Re - mon - te_au

SOPRANO 2 *p* Re - mon - te_au

TENOR 1 *p* Re - mon - te_au

Moderato ♩ = 76

Orchestra

p 4 Solo Violins

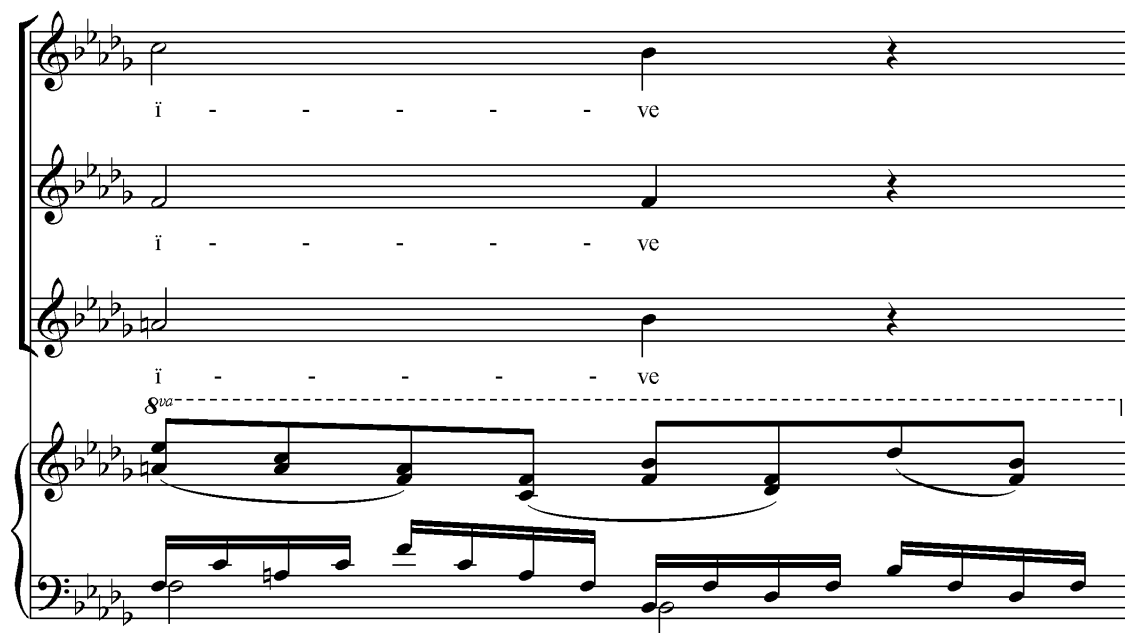
2 harps *pp*

8^{va}

ciel, â - - - - me na -

ciel, â - - - - me na

ciel, 8^{va}



These two passages do, of course, fulfil different functions within each work, with Berlioz's Chorus being much more extended and calculated to provide a fitting conclusion to a work conceived on a generous scale. The relevant section in Sullivan's work is briefer, but no less significant since it is here that the character's motivation must convince not only Elsie's mother Ursula, but the audience as well. In the same way, the essential innocence of Marguerite in *Faust* must first be established and then put beyond doubt to enable the audience to believe in the drama. There must be no misgivings concerning her moral status, that she is more sinned against than sinning, despite such elements (in Berlioz's version) as the inadvertent killing of her mother, by too generous a dose of narcotic on the occasions of Faust's visits, for which she is condemned as a parricide. Elsie is not so handicapped, but her vision must nevertheless carry conviction.

Both composers include a type of double chorus; Sullivan juxtaposes Lucifer's monologue against the hymn sung by the pilgrims, in a manner quite different from his use of a similar device in the comic operas. In Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*, in the final section of Scene VIII (the end of Part II), the Soldiers' Chorus and the Students' Song are first heard separately and then together, with Mephistopheles and Faust doubling the first basses.

Rushton has the following to say about this passage;

the gloriously anarchic superimposition of these choruses makes a climax equivalent in weight to the Hungarian March at the end of Part 1. The students' song begins resolutely in D minor 2/4, against the soldiers' B flat major 6/8, but while the students stick to their metre, their tonality is eventually assimilated. Faust (and Mephistopheles) sing along with the students; (Rushton, 2001: 306).

Ex.3.56 Berlioz, Soldiers Chorus and Students' Song from *La Damnation de Faust*, from beginning
(orchestral reduction omitted)

FAUST *f* Jam nox stel - la - ta____

MEPHIST. *f* Jam nox stel - la - ta____

TENOR 1 *f* Vil - les en - tou - ré - es De murs et rem - parts,____

TENOR 2 *f* Vil - es en - tou - ré - es De murs et rem - parts,____

BASS 1 *f* Jam nox stel - la - ta____

BASS 2 *f* Vil - les en - tou - ré - es De murs et rem - parts,____

nox stel - la - ta ve - le - mi - na pan - dit.

nox stel - la - ta ve - le - mi - na pan - dit.

nox stel - la - ta ve - le - mi - na pan dit.

nox stel - la - ta ve - le - mi - na pan dit.

This is a much more extreme example of the technique than Sullivan ever attempted, even in the comic operas and only perhaps Charles Ives can provide comparable examples of ‘simultaneous musics’ in works such as the *Holiday Symphony* (1897–1913), for example. The musical portrayal of conflict was really alien to Sullivan’s temperament and the tonal difficulties that this would involve would not attract him, no matter how much he admired Berlioz or to what extent he might wish to imitate him. In the comic operas Sullivan’s concern was for harmonic coalescence and there are many examples which are typical of his approach when using this technique, which he also adopts here, although the more austere style of melodic writing is worth noting, since Lucifer’s vocal line has a largely rhythmic function within the structure and the obvious tunefulness of the typical comic opera double chorus is absent. Unlike Berlioz, there is no suggestion of bitonality, the different metres and changes in time signature being a sufficient contrast and the two lines remain distinct and audible throughout, whereas in even the most skilled performance, the confused sound of the two very different songs presented together in Berlioz’s work is not an entirely pleasant sound, *pace* Rushton.

Ex.3.57 Sullivan, *The Golden Legend*, Scene 3, Lucifer with the chorus of pilgrims (orchestral reduction omitted)

Lucifer

strong! *ff* First I must act to my heart's con - tent This

Tenors
and Bases
(pilgrims)

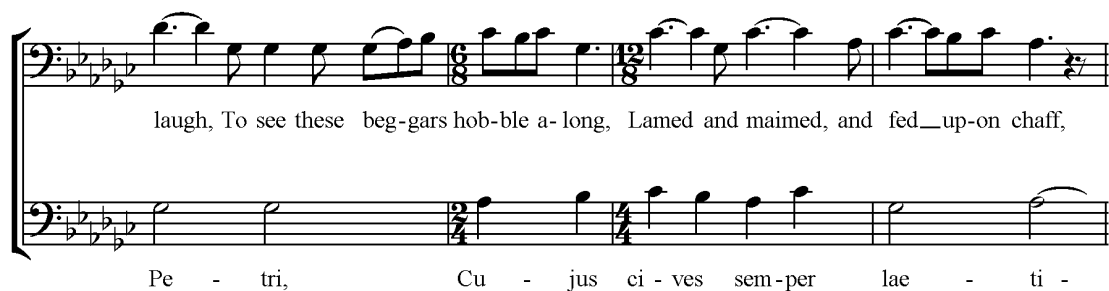
Cu - jus fa - ber auc - tor

mum - er - y and_ this merr - i - ment, And drive this mot - ley flock of sheep In - to the field_ where

lu - - cis, Cu - jus por - tae lig - num

drink and sleep_ The jol - ly old fri - ars of Be - ne - vent. Of a truth, it of - ten pro - vokes me to

cru - - cis, cu - jus cla - vis lin - gua



It is curious that Berlioz's more extreme instance appears not to have elicited comment within the early reception history of *La Damnation de Faust*, yet, at first hearing even today, the effect is startling. Rushton also remarks that Faust finally joins the soldiers' line 'as if aware that they are all on the same mission, hunting for girls...the devil's plan is that Faust will destroy an innocent girl.' This is also the Devil's plan in *The Golden Legend*, having achieved ascendancy over Prince Henry, he aims at Elsie's destruction through his agency.

While the parallels between these two choral works are apparent and provide the most sustained example of Berlioz's influence upon Sullivan, there is at least one instance to be found within the comic operas, where Sullivan seems to be grateful to recall the work of the older composer. In the middle of Act 1 of *The Gondoliers* there is a wedding chorus that introduces Tessa's song 'When a merry maiden marries'. It is introduced by the following passage played by the orchestra that foreshadows the vocal material:

Ex.3.58 *The Gondoliers*, chorus and song from Act 1, bars 1 to 10

Allegretto moderato
Flute and oboe in octaves

Repeat 3 times

Strings, horns and bassoon

It is instructive to compare this passage with that which begins the *Sérénade d'un montagnard des Abruzzes à sa maîtresse*, the third movement of Berlioz's *Harold en Italie*, with its sound picture of bagpipes and pifferi (a type of oboe). There is a similarity in the scoring, although Sullivan prefers the more conventional pairing of oboe and flute in octaves to Berlioz's more picturesque oboe and piccolo. The rhythmic figuration is very similar, and for Sullivan, like his use of Italian dance rhythms elsewhere in the work, this is used to supply some local colour. The similarity in situation between the Abruzzi shepherd serenading his sweetheart and the brother gondoliers marrying their girls is also likely to be intentional, although given the comparative lack of real dramatic tension in the libretto, it is not surprising that, despite the Italian setting, Sullivan eschews Verdi's influence, to

which he was apt to turn for use in any scene involving a confrontation and/or the exchange of reproaches. These would include the scene between Ruth and Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Katisha's attempted disclosures at the end of the first act of *The Mikado* or Phyllis's recriminations directed at Strephon in the Finale to Act 1 of *Iolanthe*.

Ex.3.59 Berlioz, *Harold en Italie*, third movement, from the beginning

The musical score for Ex.3.59, Berlioz's *Harold en Italie*, third movement, from the beginning, is presented in three systems. The first system includes staves for Oboe and Clarinet, Oboe and piccolo, and Violas. The second and third systems continue the orchestration with various woodwinds and strings. The music is characterized by complex, rhythmic patterns and a dense orchestration.

It is arguable that Berlioz's most obvious influence on Sullivan was in the matter of orchestration, but this was something common to many nineteenth- and twentieth-century composers for whom his *Traité d'Orchestration* was an invaluable resource. Otherwise, one must regard *La Damnation de Faust* as the most significant of his works as far as any audible impact on Sullivan's music is concerned and specifically, *The Golden Legend*. However, even this statement requires qualification, since it is only one of several factors which can be identified as contributing to the final form of the work, Sullivan being nothing if not eclectic when drawing his various elements together in his attempt to make a coherent whole. The next section will discuss those that can be attributed to the music of Franz Liszt.

Franz Liszt (1811—86)

Young says of Liszt's *Die Glocken des Strassburger Münsters* (1874) that 'it is difficult to believe that Sullivan was unaware of this score', (Young, 1971: 221) although he offers no independent evidence. In his book on Liszt, Watson tells us that this work had its origin in Longfellow's visit to Rome in the winter of 1868–9, when he met the composer and Princess Carolyne Sayn-

Wittgenstein, with whom he was by then closely involved, several times. She was deeply impressed by his poetry, particularly its Christian symbolism. Liszt had intended to set Longfellow's *Excelsior* for her, but nothing came of it, so she encouraged him to set the Prologue to *The Golden Legend*, which he did, completing it in October 1874. The work was given on 10th March 1875 in Budapest in a joint concert by Liszt and Wagner to raise funds for Bayreuth. The choral work was preceded by the short *Prelude Excelsior*, the motif of which Wagner was to recall when writing the opening theme of *Parsifal* (Watson, 1989: 148).

Most commentators on Liszt's music have tended to pass over this work, although Watson is enthusiastic, describing it as, 'A short but splendidly evocative and exciting work...Lucifer (a darkly agitated Klingsor-like baritone role) and his demons of the air attempt to tear down the cross from the spire of the cathedral in a night of storm and lightning' (Watson, 1989: 303).

Sullivan had met Liszt when he was a student in Leipzig in June 1859. In 1886, the year of his death and the year in which Sullivan's work was composed, Liszt made his last visit to London and Sullivan placed himself at his disposal. Liszt declined an invitation to the Philharmonic concert conducted by Sullivan, who would have included one of Liszt's works had he accepted. This does establish that Sullivan had enough familiarity with Liszt's output to be prepared to conduct a performance of his music, in his presence, at quite short notice. One can only speculate as to which work he might have chosen (Jacobs, 1984: 232).

Both Sullivan and Liszt set the word 'hasten' to a falling minor third. The American Dudley Buck, a contemporary of Sullivan's at Leipzig, also completed a setting of a selection of verses from Longfellow's epic. Young commends the work, which seems to be more dramatic in form, including a quantity of material that Bennett chose to omit and makes some comparisons between the various settings of the opening. In this case Buck chooses a falling fourth. The three quotations are given below.

Ex.3.60 Lucifer's first vocal entry in the Prologue as set by Sullivan (a), Liszt (b) and Buck (c)

(a)

Lucifer *Quasi recit.*

Has - ten! Has - ten! ____ O ye spi- rits!

(b)

Lucifer *ff*

Has - ten! Has - ten! Oh ye Spi - rits!

(c)

Lucifer
molto energico
f

Hast - en! Hast - en! Hast - en, oh, ye spir - its!

Sullivan's experience at the Savoy Theatre meant that he naturally adopted an English speech rhythm. Liszt, setting what was for him a foreign language (his native tongue was German), does not and the highest note, D sharp, with an accent, sounds forced and unidiomatic, mainly because of the placing of the 'i' vowel of the word 'spirits'; something Sullivan would have avoided. In general, Liszt's work suffers from his uncertain treatment of the text. The falling shape of Sullivan's phrase sounds inevitable by comparison, with the imperative ('hasten!') being the highest point of the phrase. One takes due account of Watson's comment that the text 'illustrates Liszt's scrupulous concern over the minutiae of word-setting, with extensive musical alternatives to suit the metre and accents of each language' (Watson, 1989: 148). The score discloses as much, but by comparison with Sullivan's setting, nothing prevents the work from sounding stilted when sung in English, as opposed to German.

The two composers' treatment of the forces is also similar, although Liszt includes the tenors in his Powers of the Air as well as the bells. The chief difference between the two settings is that Liszt's lacks any real dramatic tension. Unlike Sullivan, he avoids the conflict between the various forces, so the listener is not really made conscious that good is being pitted against evil. Sullivan's long experience as a composer for the theatre ensured that the dramatic elements were clearly delineated, although the point where Lucifer, the Spirits and the bells combine their various motives is as close as Sullivan ever came to Berlioz's boldness in the juxtaposition of the Soldiers' Chorus and Students' Song in *La Damnation de Faust*, discussed above. Taken as a whole, Liszt's setting fails to carry conviction.

This becomes even more puzzling when one considers the many works in Liszt's output which deal specifically with the macabre or demonic: *Totentanz*, the *Mephisto Waltzes* and the *Faust*

Symphony to name only three. Yet the musical language of *Die Glocken des Strassburger Münsters*, while there is considerable use of the diminished seventh in the music allotted to Lucifer, by comparison, verges on the bland. In contrast to Lucifer's opening lines, the music for the Powers of the Air is in a very diatonic E major, that for the bells in A minor, but closer to the Aeolian mode. It is an uneasy mix and in performance the effect is unsatisfactory. While Sullivan may have recalled some minor details of Liszt's vocal writing, his debt to Liszt regarding musical style is more likely to relate to one or more of the works mentioned above.

Scott in his book *From the Erotic to the Demonic* devotes an entire chapter to 'Liszt and the Demonic' and quotes some examples from the Mephistopheles movement of the *Faust Symphony*. The following passages are found quite early in the movement, with the second in compound time, fulfilling the function of a scherzo within the symphonic structure. (The examples are taken from August Stradal's transcription of the work for piano solo, but which includes indications of Liszt's orchestration.)

Ex.3.61 Liszt, *A Faust Symphony*, Mephistopheles, bars 56 to 61

The musical score for bars 56 to 61 of Liszt's *Faust Symphony*, Mephistopheles movement, is presented in two systems. The first system is in 3/4 time and marked 'Sempre allegro'. It begins with a piano introduction marked 'rinforzando' and 'Str.' (string). The second system continues the piano introduction, marked 'p' (piano) and 'Fag.' (fagotto). The third system shows the Oboe part, marked 'Oboe.'.

Later, bars 72 to 79

The musical score for bars 72 to 79 of Liszt's *Faust Symphony*, Mephistopheles movement, is presented in two systems. The first system is in 6/8 time and features a piano introduction marked 'm.d' (mezzo-dolce) and 'Str.' (string). The second system continues the piano introduction, marked 'Cello. C.B. m.g.' (Cello, Contrabasso, mezzo-giochi) and 'Pauke.' (Pauke).



This is much closer in character to the idiom of Sullivan's Prologue than Liszt's setting, as the quotation below shows. It is doubtful whether Sullivan would have had a specific work by Liszt in mind, but as Scott amply demonstrates, the demonic in Liszt's music offered a recognisable tonal language that Sullivan could draw upon.

Ex.3.62 *The Golden Legend*, Prologue at Letter H from bar 114

Scott says of Liszt that, 'In constructing the demonic, the primary musical technique for Liszt is that of negation: negation of the beautiful so that it becomes the ugly, of nobility so that it becomes vulgarity, of grace so that it becomes awkwardness, of tranquillity so that it becomes perturbation, and so forth' (Scott, 2003: 129).

Liszt, being the influential figure that he was, stimulated many imitators and this harmonic style eventually became something of a convention and by the twentieth century almost a cliché, particularly in music for the cinema. In nineteenth-century opera it became commonplace, which, of course, enabled Sullivan to parody it with success at the Savoy, most notably in *Ruddigore* (1887), written in the same year as the commission for Leeds and discussed in detail in 3.3 which deals with Sullivan's use of chromaticism.

In the Prologue Sullivan appears to have experimented with this musical language for a specific purpose and rarely returned to it, at least in his serious music. In the opera *Ruddigore*, the music provided for the appearance of the ghosts and specifically Sir Roderic Murgatroyd's song, does somewhat recall the Prologue, as does a song in Act 1 of *The Grand Duke*, the last comic opera written with Gilbert in 1896. It is noteworthy that this song is about illness, more precisely, psychosomatic illness ('When you find you're a broken-down critter'). It can hardly be coincidental that Sullivan should adopt for this song a highly chromatic harmonic musical language.

Ex.3.63 *The Grand Duke* Act 1, song for Rudolph from bar 1

Grand Duke

When you

find you're a bro-ken-down crit-ter Who is all in a trim-mle and twit-er, When your

to bar 14

Bar 14

spine is all creep-y with spi-ders, And you're high-ly gam-boge in the gill

Sullivan ends the first half of the verse in the dominant key, but at bar 14 he begins to move chromatically away from it, yet the return to the dominant at bar 21 sounds entirely natural and unforced.

The late opera *The Beauty Stone* (1898) includes the Devil as one of the *dramatis personae* and while there are similarities in some of the music that Sullivan provides for him to passages in the Scenes from *The Golden Legend*, as distinct from the Prologue, he avoids any recollection of Lisztian atonality. However, this idiom makes two or three brief appearances later in the choral work, associated with Prince Henry's illness, in Scene 1 in his first encounter with Lucifer and in Scene 4 at the point where Elsie is taken away to lay down her life and these will be discussed later.

Scott quotes Allen Forte writing about Liszt's experimental music as saying that what makes it

so special and so interesting is not its unusual surface features-- which are, of course, extraordinary—but the fact that it represents a systematic expansion of traditional voice-leading and harmonic models, an expansion that incorporates, as basic harmonies, sonorities (pitch-class sets) that are not part of the central syntax of tonal music, but that derive, in the most extreme instances, from a process of accretion to the augmented triad and the diminished triad (Forte, 'Liszt's Experimental Idiom', 227, quoted by Scott, 2003: 150).

It appears that, in a strictly limited way, it was this that Sullivan was attempting to emulate in the Prologue. In both Sullivan's and Liszt's settings the Prologue ends, all passion spent, with a setting of the hymn *Nocte Surgentes*. Sullivan provides a complete contrast to what has gone before, writing for unison male voices in minims and with slow-moving diatonic harmony from the organ.

Ex.3.64 Settings of the hymn *Nocte Surgentes* from *The Golden Legend* and *Die Glocken des Strassburger Münsters*

(a) Sullivan

Tenors and Basses

mf Noc - te sur - gen - tes Vi - gi - le mus_
Noc - te sur - gen - tes Vi - gu - le mus_

(b) Liszt

p Noc - te sur - gen - tes vi - gi - le - mus
Noc - te sur - gen - tes vi - gi - le - mus

Both the composers intend to create a marked contrast with what has gone before. Sullivan has been accused of almost descending to bathos at this point, the harmonic restlessness and rapid figuration succeeded by a slow-moving unison melody for male voices, but this is to misunderstand the composer's intention. The unison line he provides still has both shape and some animation. Rather than simply providing a setting of the evening hymn that would find favour with the audience, one perhaps shocked by the novelty of the main section of the Prologue, Sullivan provides a subtle transition to ensure that the connection between this final section and what has gone before is apparent but sounds natural. The main part of the Prologue marked *Allegro energico* has a metronome marking of 80 dotted crotchets to the minute, Sullivan using various forms of compound time throughout the movement. The transition, occurring 14 bars after rehearsal letter T, leads to the setting of the above text, marked *Andante maestoso*, with a metronome marking of 84 minims to the minute, and notated in 4/2. To ensure that the change in style sounds inevitable, the beat should, in fact speed up, the minim of the hymn moving slightly faster than the dotted crotchet of the Prologue. Sullivan also keeps this section commendably short.

Liszt's setting, the beginning of which is quoted above, is more slow-moving, but the main section of the Prologue in his version is less animated, although at the climax, before Lucifer admits defeat ('Baffled, baffled!'), there occurs the closest point of similarity between the two versions, with Liszt, like Sullivan at the same point, writing rapid sextuplet figures for the strings. Sullivan makes the hymn a brief epilogue to the opening section, while Liszt is more expansive, including a setting of the words *Laudemus Deum Verum*, part of the text that Sullivan does not set, but defensible in a setting which was not intended to be part of a larger work. Sullivan's version has more urgency and

drama, but apart from some minor similarities in word setting that could well be coincidental where both composers have adopted the same libretto, he looked to Liszt's other works that treat similar themes as examples suitable for imitation.

However, Sullivan was rarely content to confine himself to one source and the tonal plan and concept of the Prologue owe a considerable amount to Berlioz's earlier example in *La Damnation de Faust*. For the figuration and the more adventurous chromatic writing, Sullivan drew on Liszt's music. He succeeded in achieving a result that is both individual and distinctive and while not flawless, is in many ways a parallel to his earlier assimilation of the techniques and sound-worlds of Mendelssohn, Schubert and Schumann, when he was beginning to write his own early works at Leipzig and in London in the 1860s. In the following section the entire work is discussed in detail to demonstrate to what extent *The Golden Legend* stood apart from Sullivan's earlier essays in the genre and from those of his contemporaries.

3.5 Sullivan's Development as a Composer of Oratorio

When Sullivan returned from Leipzig and began to establish himself as a composer, his first objective was to attempt to secure himself a place in the ranks of composers of symphonic and orchestral music. The Symphony in E, the Overture *In Memoriam* and the Cello Concerto were all performed for the first time in 1866. The Overture *Marmion* followed in 1867 and his best-known purely orchestral work, the Overture *Di Ballo*, was written for the Birmingham Festival in August 1870. This was Sullivan's last work solely for orchestra until the *Imperial March* of 1893, a *pièce d'occasion*. This was actuated partly by a desire to capitalise on what he must have considered to be one of his strengths, since his initial triumph at the Crystal Palace had been due to a work for orchestra, the vocal contributions to the incidental music to *The Tempest* notwithstanding. Also because of the prestige that such a success would confer; it would enable Sullivan to be compared to his European counterparts. At this period, the obstacles to this, both financial and practical, were far greater in the fields of symphonic music or opera than in oratorio or cantata.

This is not to say that any of Sullivan's works of the 1860s could be accounted failures; all were well received, but further performances were rare and none of the works given above were published until much later; the Symphony in 1915, *In Memoriam* in 1885, and *Di Ballo* in 1889, but neither *Marmion* or the Cello Concerto were published at all. In the case of the latter, it was written for Piatti, the foremost executant of his day and the failure of the work to establish itself remains something of a mystery, given the reputations of both the composer and the performer, a point made by Jacobs, who records that there was only one revival of work in Sullivan's lifetime by amateur forces in Westminster Town Hall in February 1887.

The Prodigal Son (1869)

In retrospect Sullivan's gravitation towards oratorio seems inexorable. *The Prodigal Son* was written for the Three Choirs Festival at Worcester of 1869 and Sullivan completed it in the space of three weeks. It was intended to occupy the first half of a Festival concert and designed to last approximately one hour. Even at his first attempt, Sullivan's approach was never to be entirely orthodox. The choice of subject was unusual, since few had attempted a setting of it and his familiarity with the biblical source, through his years as a Chapel Royal chorister, enabled him to prepare the libretto without assistance; the only instance of his doing so. His own preface to the work is of interest as he explains why he chose this parable, but also his priorities when regarding the subject as a suitable one. One of the features that would have appealed to him was that the story concerned a family and might almost be described as a domestic parable. Sullivan's own feeling for family was very strong and was shown in the care and support he expended upon his dead brother's family in California. It is also telling that he should remark on the opportunities for what he terms 'local colour', but as will become apparent, not everyone would have regarded this aspect as desirable in an oratorio.

It is a remarkable fact that the Parable of the Prodigal Son should never before have been chosen as the text of a sacred musical composition. The story is so natural and pathetic, and forms so complete a whole; its lesson is so thoroughly Christian; the characters, though few, are so perfectly contrasted, and the opportunity for the employment of 'local colour' is so obvious, that it is indeed astonishing to find the subject so long overlooked (Sullivan, Preface to *The Prodigal Son*: 1869).

In fact, there had been at least two attempts to set this text, one by Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643–1704) as a motet, and one by Samuel Arnold (1740–1802). Neither of these works were well known and Sullivan was certainly breaking new ground as far as the English oratorio was concerned. His view of the central character is also worth noting, partly because he states that it departs from what was then the orthodox view taken by many biblical commentators:

The Prodigal himself has been conceived, not as of a naturally brutish and depraved disposition...but rather as a buoyant, restless youth, tired of the monotony of home...going forth in the confidence of his own simplicity and ardour, and led gradually away into follies and sins which, at the outset, would have been as distasteful as they were strange to him. (Sullivan, Preface to *The Prodigal Son*: 1869)

Biblical criticism was undergoing considerable changes due to the influence of German biblical scholarship. A. P. Stanley, writing in 1865 about nineteenth-century theology, stated that it was German theologians who began 'to interpret the Bible with the same freedom from party feeling,

the same single-minded love of truth, the same fearlessness of consequence...as that they employed on other books;' (*Religion in Victorian Britain* III, 1988: 40–41). The tendency seems to have been rather to exaggerate the younger son's profligacy and Sullivan's attitude as expressed above seems to show his sympathy towards a more 'natural' interpretation of the events of the parable. Stanley added that, 'All we have to ascertain is not what theories this or that man hold, or may claim to hold about the Bible', but what are the actual characteristics of the Bible itself' (*Religion in Victorian Britain* III, 1988: 41).

It is apparent that Sullivan was attracted by the inherent dramatic possibilities of the story at a time when most libretti treating of a religious subject were often bereft of dramatic conflict. Apart from the present work, only two can be regarded as exceptions and those are Gore Ouseley's *The Martyrdom of St Polycarp* and Sullivan's 1880 oratorio, *The Martyr of Antioch*, both of which deal with rise of Christianity in what was a pagan world, and these are cited by Caldwell as significant departures from the norm (Caldwell, 1997: 217, 296). Sullivan also identifies the one disadvantage of this subject and that is its brevity. It necessitated supplementing the text taken from Luke's Gospel with suitable verses from the books of Revelation, Proverbs, Isaiah, Genesis, Hebrews and the Psalms among other biblical sources. Sullivan's ability to select passages from scripture that would effectively complement the main biblical theme shows a surprising familiarity with the source and an outstanding ability in theological interpretation, certainly for a layman, although there is no evidence of Sullivan reading anything theological. He tended to read to be entertained rather than challenged or provoked to reflection. (See also 2.5 *The Impact of Literature*.) However, the view of Sullivan that has come down to posterity is as a hard-living, somewhat self-indulgent pleasure-seeker whose Anglicanism was of the most summary kind and the contrast is striking (Bradley, 2014: 115).

Weighed against this is the fact that Sullivan's approach was essentially that of the opera composer with the dramatic element being the most important. His omission of the elder brother as a character in the story was on the ground that 'the episode has no dramatic connection with the former and principal portion, and has therefore not been treated' (Sullivan, Preface to *The Prodigal Son*: 1869). The theological connection would be clear to Sullivan, but the dramatic considerations would have a greater priority; he was concerned with creating an effective work of art for which he would be prepared to sacrifice a theological detail. Bradley makes the point that the theological connection between the two is important, namely, that it stresses God's apparent favour shown to the repentant sinner over the faithful servant, but it was the dramatic element that took precedence, as it had with Mendelssohn. When composing *Elijah*, he had written to a friend that 'I would fain see the dramatic element more predominant as well as more exuberant' (Quoted by Bradley, 2013: 115).

Sullivan's instincts for identifying those aspects of the text which would make it effective for musical treatment were sound; the most successful are those which deal either with what Sullivan termed 'local colour' and the emotions of the principal characters. It is also possible that Sullivan would resist the task of portraying the elder brother's resentment, particularly as the scene between the father and older son is unwitnessed by any other member of the household and chronologically falls at the end of the parable and Sullivan would wish to avoid ending the work in such a way.

The sixth number is a bacchanal, a setting of the text 'Let us eat and drink' is taken from Isaiah (Ch. 22, v.13). Sullivan bases this on a rhythmic figure that is present in every bar until the end of the chorus. Some critics expressed doubts about the propriety of including such a movement is sacred choral work and similar reservations were expressed about *The Martyr of Antioch*, where Sullivan again uses opposing musical styles.

Ex.3.65 (a) *The Prodigal Son*, 'Let us eat and drink' from bar 1

Allegro vivace

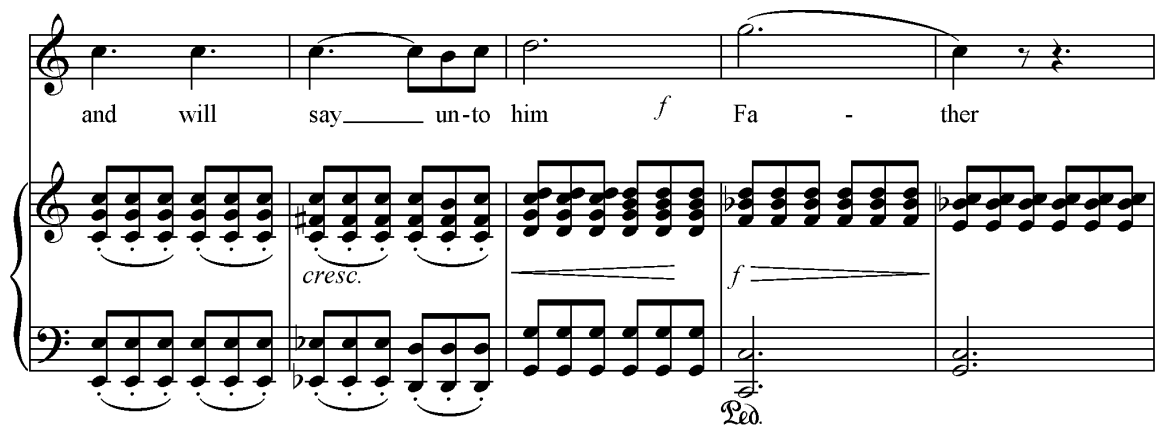
At thirteen bars after Letter C in the vocal score, Sullivan superimposes an additional orchestral ostinato figure in step-wise motion shown at Ex.3.65 (a) above, which remains constant until two bars before Letter E. It returns at Letter G and the two figures are repeated until the end of the number. Sullivan returned to this technique in his last completed opera *The Rose of Persia* (1899) in an extended ensemble (No.10 in the vocal score). At bar 161 Sullivan introduces a two-note ostinato figure, shown in the first three bars of the extract, that continues until the end of the number.

(b) *The Rose of Persia*, Act 1, No.10 from bar 161

Allegro con brio
Bar 161

(c) *The Prodigal Son*, 'Let us eat and drink', 13 bars after letter C from bar 52





While Sullivan showed considerable skill in assembling the passages of scripture to make a convincing libretto, at least from the theological point of view, this is the first of his more substantial works that demonstrates his apparent inability to detect a flaw in the dramatic structure. At the point where the father greets his estranged son, their reconciliation is depicted in a duet which sets words from the Book of Genesis, words spoken by Jacob in the story of Joseph: ‘My son is yet alive! Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, and thou art yet alive.’ As Bradley says, ‘This is a daring and inspired piece of biblical transposition, which again points to a considerable knowledge of the Scriptures’ (Bradley, 2014: 117). He makes the point that in the Parable of the Prodigal Son there is no suggestion that his father feels he can now die having witnessed his son’s return. Given that Sullivan had decided on dramatic grounds to omit the elder brother’s reaction to his younger sibling’s unexpected appearance, the work could have finished at this point, but would have been too short to fill the first half of the concert. This meant that anything which followed this point in the narrative would appear to be redundant and unfortunately this is the impression conveyed by the concluding four movements.

What does follow is in the form of a theological meditation on the significance of the parable; a lengthy chorus of praise drawn from Psalm 107. However, Sullivan’s treatment of the words, ‘They went astray in the wilderness’, which forms the central section, is another striking instance of his dramatic instinct at work. It takes the form of a canon between basses and sopranos followed by altos and tenors, backed only by orchestral chords with no instrumental doubling. The effect is striking and austere and Young comments that, ‘Here is Sullivan at his most economical and his most effective, and way ahead of his British contemporaries’ (Young, 1971: 89).

Ex.3.67 *The Prodigal Son*, 'They went astray' from bar 25

Moderato

SOPRANO
ALTO

TENOR
BASS

Basses *p*

They went a - stray

Orchestra

Sopranos

They went a - stray in the

in the wil - der-ness in the

This is followed a tenor aria which based on chapter 12 of the Letter to the Hebrews where he explains that the Lord chastens those he loves; a quartet which uses verse 18 of Psalm 34 and a final rather over-extended chorus of praise to the Father and Redeemer. Young says of this that, '[it] is Handelian in outline, but is, alas, too restricted in movement to carry conviction' (Young, 1971: 90).

Given the short time that Sullivan expended on writing the work, *The Prodigal Son* is far from being without merit. However, most effective sections indicate where his strengths are going to lie; in the portrayal of a protagonist, the effect of various events upon him and the setting in which those events occur. Sullivan's former teacher, Goss, detected a lack of depth in the work and clearly felt that the circumstances of its composition meant that Sullivan had not produced the best effort of which he was capable. He urged him to write another similar work in the future 'putting out all your strength. Don't do anything so pretentious as an oratorio or even a symphony without all your power, which seldom comes in one fit' (quoted in Bradley, 2013: 118).

It is clear from this comment that Goss regarded a symphony as being of an inferior genre to oratorio, but given that he had been born in 1800, the works that he would have known during his lifetime which had carried the title of symphony would have been of far less moment than an oratorio, with the exception of the rare performances of a Beethoven symphony, which he might

still have regarded as unsuitable for imitation. Oratorio would also have been regarded as a more taxing assignment, with its requirements for orchestra, chorus and soloists. Nevertheless, it is a reminder of the cultural environment in which Sullivan had to develop his gifts and how completely unlike any other country in Europe England was at this time. Goss was not alone in detecting a lack of commitment in Sullivan's first essay in writing a religious choral work; his friend Stainer expressed similar reservations and that, for all his facility and obvious skill, felt that Sullivan should 'write for the future...regardless of encores and banknotes' (Dibble, 2007: 114). The critical reception, however, was largely favourable and the general feeling was that that he had considerably increased his stature as an artist.

The Light of the World (1873)

Sullivan's second attempt at an oratorio was for the Birmingham Music Festival, which was notable for having sponsored the first performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Costa's two oratorios and Benedict's *St Peter*. While *The Prodigal Son* had been written in three weeks, Sullivan took longer than usual with his second attempt, writing to his friend Davison, the music critic of *The Times* in May 1873 that 'I never go out in the world as my oratorio takes all my time and thought...I have stuck to my work since last Michaelmas without faltering' (quoted in Bradley, 2013: 122). Another difference was that, in the construction of the libretto, he had considerable assistance from Sir George Grove who, in addition to his other accomplishments, was a biblical scholar of some note, having produced his own concordance to the Bible in 1854 and was a major contributor to a Bible dictionary published in the early 1860s (Bradley, 2013: 66). The range of texts chosen is as eclectic as Sullivan's for *The Prodigal Son* from both the New and Old Testaments, but the effect is less focused, and the work would certainly have benefited from a shorter book. It lasts approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes and there are 42 separate numbers.

Sullivan again provides a preface to the vocal score in which he says that the work had been designed to 'set forth the human aspect of the life of our Lord on earth, exemplifying it by some of the actual incidents in His career, which bear specially upon His attributes of Preacher, Healer and Prophet.' Bradley makes the point that this was also the stated intention of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber when writing *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1970), to treat Jesus as a man in terms of his earthly life rather than as the Son of God (Bradley, 2013: 123). In other words, the opposite emphasis from a work such as Handel's *Messiah* or Mendelssohn's unfinished *Christus* (first performed in 1852). The specific verse which inspired Holman Hunt's famous painting under the same title 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock' (Revelation 3: 20), is not set in the libretto, nor is Jesus's description of himself in the same words. Bradley's view is that, 'while the painting may possibly have been in Sullivan's mind when he selected the title of his work, it was certainly not a major influence in terms of its theme' (Bradley, 2013: 122).

Eden states that *The Light of the World* 'is conceived from the outset without internal form...except that it begins with the Nativity and ends with the Resurrection' (Eden, 1986:167), but it must be said that the Passion and Crucifixion receive scant treatment compared to the Nativity, the longest section, that dominates Part 1 of the work. The second part, which is set in Jerusalem, is marred by a somewhat involved depiction of a ruler enquiring of his people with contempt whether Christ will come from Galilee. Where one might have expected a dramatic treatment of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, Sullivan provides merely an unaccompanied setting of a verse from Psalm 23, 'Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death', in the pallid religious style which has done his reputation such harm. The balance is somewhat restored by the next item which is a vigorous setting of the words, 'Men and brethren whosoever among you feareth God!' followed by 'Jesus of Nazareth a man approved of God by miracles and signs which God did by Him.' However, this is not really an adequate substitute for what should be, in narrative terms, the tragic climax of the passion.

From the dramatic point of view, this was certainly a missed opportunity. Today we are accustomed to performances of Bach's Passions where Jesus is a character in the narrative who sings in the first person, but English-language oratorios at this period tended to follow Handel's example where this is not the case. Sullivan does include Jesus as one of his *dramatis personae*, which makes the omission of the passion narrative even more puzzling.

It is also interesting to compare the work with Stainer's *The Crucifixion* or Maunder's *Olivet to Calvary*. Both works were of much smaller pretension than Sullivan's oratorio, being intended for church choirs and accompanied solely by the organ. Yet both composers ensured that the passion and death of Jesus occupied the fulcrum point of the narrative, to which all the earlier events are tending. Stainer did not seem to have a strong dramatic sense, but 'The Appeal of the Crucified' (No.18) contains almost the only moment of real drama. The 'Processional to Calvary' (No.3) which is followed by the chorus 'Fling wide the gates!' involves too much repetition of the musical and verbal material to be dramatic, but in fairness it must be said that the work was intended as a Meditation rather than a musical representation of the passion, dealing with the various events in the order in which they occurred. Sullivan's work was written for the Birmingham Festival of August 1873.

Ex.3.68 Stainer, *The Crucifixion*, 'The Appeal of the Crucified' from bar 49

then, but then They shout - ed a -

then, but then

Cres.

gainst Me *ff* *ff* 'Cru - ci - fy! Cru - ci - fy! Cru - ci - fy!

Maunder in *Olivet to Calvary* treats the dramatic elements with much more conviction, such as the crowd's response to Pilate's question, 'Shall I crucify your king?'

Ex.3.69 J. H. Maunder, *Olivet to Calvary*, 'Before Pilate' from bar 42

Allegro agitato

We

Doubled by organ

We have no king but Cae - sar, we

have no king but Cae - sar! *ff* we have no king but Cae - sar!

have no king but Cae - sar! we have no king but Cae - sar!

Like Sullivan's work, it is divided into separate parts, beginning with Christ's entrance into Jerusalem, his lament over the city, his expulsion of the traders from the temple and his return over the Mount of Olives. The second part begins with the Supper of the Passover, the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane, the entrance of the crowd and his arrest, his appearance before Pilate, the journey to Calvary and his execution. As a scenario for a sacred choral work of this type, there is a great deal to be said for it and it is a mystery as to why Sullivan and Grove took to the approach they did. A further contradiction to their stated aim in treating the person of Jesus Christ primarily as a man rather than as the Son of God, is their inclusion in the third scene of the raising of Lazarus, taken from St John's Gospel with some Old Testament additions. Arguably the raising of someone from the dead would seem to stress the supernatural element over the human and this has the effect of obscuring Sullivan's and Grove's objectives in assembling the libretto.

Another feature of both Stainer's and Maunder's works is the inclusion of hymns in which the congregation can join. All the hymns in *The Crucifixion* were written by Stainer especially for the work. Maunder includes 'Just as I am, without one plea' and 'Rock of ages', in the latter case reproducing one of the tunes traditionally associated with these words as well as his own setting. In terms of quality, Stainer's hymn tunes are greatly to be preferred and two of them 'Cross of Jesus' and 'All for Jesus' have gone on to have independent existences beyond the work for which they were composed. For the type of work Sullivan was attempting, however, this feature would have been out of place. In his preface to the vocal score, Sullivan made clear that he was not attempting to write a Passion, that would have included congregational chorales if the examples by Bach were taken as a model, and while the effect of the work is certainly devotional, there seems to have been a determination on Sullivan's part to ensure that the proper place for its performance was the concert hall rather than anywhere else such as a church, although Bradley relates that the concluding part of the chorus 'Men and Brethren' was adapted by Sir Frederick Bridge to form the Introit at the Coronation Service for Edward VII in 1902 (Bradley, 2013: 126). The inclusion of the Overture to Part 2, which in the vocal score is given in an arrangement for piano duet, would make the use of an orchestra mandatory and would effectively rule out performances where the full resources were unavailable.

As with *The Prodigal Son*, the most successful parts of the work are to be found in the treatment of the comparatively few dramatic incidents such as the setting of Jeremiah's account of Rachel weeping for her children, 'In Rama was there a voice heard' in Part 1, the setting of a text from Isaiah towards the end of Part 1, this is a text which is a rarity in English, although there are settings of it in Latin, as *Vox in Rama*; there are examples by de Wert and Clemens non Papa, and it is again an example of Sullivan concentrating on the depiction a character's state of mind. Eden describes this as being 'as bleak and comfortless as Purcell's Funeral Sentences' (Eden, 1986: 174). It follows

an abbreviated version of the Magnificat and is taken from St Matthew's recounting of Herod's slaughter of the innocents foreshadowed by Jeremiah.

Ex.3.70 *The Light of the World*, 'In Rama was there a voice heard' from bar 16

Bar 16

Soprano Solo

Woe is me now woe is me

SOPRANO ALTO

pp

Ra-chel weep-ing for her child - ren.

TENOR BASS

pp

Ra - chel weep-ing for her child - ren.

Orchestra

is me now for my soul is wear-ied be - cause of mur - der - ers.

child - ren.

In

In

The solo soprano line is unusually high, only at bar 46 dropping below treble d. Sullivan here is imitating the desolate wailing of a bereaved mother, the solo line moving by step over two or three notes for over two pages, the chorus commenting on her distress.

From the end of Part 2, 'Lord, why hidest Thou Thy face?' again for soprano, is another effective expression of individual desolation felt in the immediate aftermath of the crucifixion and this is to be found towards the end of Sullivan's work. This is part of the central section of the aria. As in *The Prodigal Son*, this is an inspired interpolation from the Old Testament (Psalms 44, 88 and Genesis Ch. 25, v.32). It has a certain amount in common with 'How many hired servants' discussed earlier, notably the repeated staccato chords in the accompaniment which is again cumulative in

effect, reaching a climax at bar 53 where the time signature change to common time. Sullivan then repeats the text in a different setting leading to an even more emphatic climax at bar 88 with a change of tempo to Allegro and a dramatic coda for the words, 'awake and be not absent from us forever.'

Ex.3.71 *The Light of the World*, 'Lord, why hidest Thou Thy face?' from bar 33

Bar 33

soprano solo

p

I am in mi - se - ry

and at the point to die

The Overture that opens Part 2 is also effective, intended to express the hostility towards Christ in the city, which in due course, will lead to his arrest and trial. To achieve this Sullivan again makes use of a repeated ostinato figure, the effect being decidedly menacing. However, while those portions of the work that deal with the more conventional expressions of piety or thanksgiving towards the deity are entirely beyond reproach, they seem to be too abstract in nature to evoke the most characteristic response from Sullivan as a composer. Sullivan seems to have been conscious of working within limitations and his next essay in the genre would effectively avoid them by not setting the scriptures.

***The Martyr of Antioch* (1880)**

Early in 1878 Sullivan had received an invitation from the Committee of the Leeds Musical Festival to compose an oratorio for the Festival to be held in 1880. He initially declined as at the time his health was poor, but he later advised the committee that, while he could not write a work that would occupy an entire concert, he would be willing to provide a shorter one, comparable in length to *The Prodigal Son*. As with the latter work, he turned to the scriptures and the story of David and

Jonathan but found difficulty in selecting complementary texts that would result in a libretto of sufficient length. He also wished to avoid comparison with Handel, who had treated the story in his oratorio *Saul* (1738). His experience of writing *The Light of the World* probably drove him to the conclusion that the Bible as a source for a musical setting placed too many restrictions on the composer and having set two such libretti, he decided that he must look elsewhere.

He turned to Henry Hart Milman's (1791-1868) long narrative poem about St Margaret of Antioch, who was the daughter of a pagan priest and a priestess herself, who became converted to Christianity. She rejects her former suitor, a Roman Prefect Olybius, who then denounces her, and she is condemned to death for her apostasy. Sullivan clearly saw the dramatic possibilities in the contrast between pagan and Christian worship and the sacrifice of her life for her faith by the central character. In addition, Margarita (the name given by Milman) is a musician in the pagan temple and the poem explores the conflict of whether pagan hymnody, with its emphasis on sensuality and its heretical character, could, with propriety, be adapted for use in Christian worship.

Sullivan encountered formidable difficulties in shaping the poem into a libretto and turned to Gilbert for assistance. Jacobs speculates as to whether he also asked Grove for his help, as he had done previously when writing *The Light of the World*, but Gilbert is the only one credited in Sullivan's preface with fulfilling this function and his contribution appears mainly to have been concerned with the matter of versification, rewriting Milman's blank verse to incorporate rhyme in several instances, but also making a number of 'valuable suggestions' (Sullivan, Preface to *The Martyr of Antioch*, 1880: 4)

Despite Sullivan's stated intention to produce a work suitable to fill one half of a festival concert, *The Martyr of Antioch* in its final form was a more substantial work than *The Prodigal Son*, running to approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes and it is divided into four scenes. The first is a representation of pagan worship; the second is the funeral of one of the persecuted Christian minority and includes a setting of the words 'Brother, thou art gone before us', which was the single most popular item from the work and was sung at Sullivan's funeral. After this has been sung, Margarita remains to sing of her Christian faith and Sullivan provides here a striking meditation on Christ's passion and death and a clear statement of Christian salvation through the atonement. This is precisely what was lacking in *The Light of the World*, where the absence of internal form in the text made the necessity for a theological focal point even more urgent, but neither Sullivan nor Grove appeared to grasp this.

The third scene includes a duet for Margarita and Olybius where she vainly tries to convert him to Christianity, but after failing to persuade him, leaves for incarceration in the prison where the Christians are being held. It is outside the prison that the fourth and final scene takes place. The pagan women are heard singing as they make their way to the temple of Apollo and the prisoners

sing a hymn to the Christian God. Margarita prepares to die by fire and in her final moments is afforded a vision of heaven and Christ. For Young, this is 'smug with respectability' (Young, 1971: 218), while Eden describes it as 'a truly ecstatic aria which sweeps her up to heaven in a state of vision far beyond the pains of the fire in she is supposed to be burning' (Eden, 1986: 173). Here Sullivan allows his dramatic instincts full rein and it is difficult to fathom why Young took the view he did. Based on this scene alone, it is understandable why the work was thought suitable for a staged performance and in this form, it was given by the Carl Rosa Opera Company in 1893.

The balance between the pagan and Christian elements within the work tends to favour the heathen, who are allotted considerably more music than the Christians. By contrast, in Milman's poem the blank verse is interspersed by five chants for the pagans and seven Christian hymns (Bradley, 2014: 131). The final scene presents the two hymns to the opposing deities first separately and then together in a manner not dissimilar to comparable passages in the comic operas. The Christian Song of Faith has been compared unfavourably with the pagan 'Now glory to the god who breaks'. Young states that 'The "song of faith" ... would not have found a place in one of the operas and is so dull that one is inclined secretly to hope for the continued incarceration of the singers' (Young, 1971: 218). Both Eden and Young conclude from this that Sullivan's sympathies were with the pagans as opposed to the Christians, but this is to misunderstand Sullivan's approach to composition. Contemporary critics did the same, with Joseph Bennett, later to provide the text of *The Golden Legend*, stating that compared to the music given to the pagans, Sullivan made 'the poor Christians and their lugubrious strains appear as uninteresting as they are sombre' (quoted in Bradley, 2013: 132). The following quotation shows both themes placed in juxtaposition.

Ex.3.72 *The Martyr of Antioch*, 'Now glory to the God who breaks'

Pagan Maidens

ff Now glo ry to the God who breaks, The mon-arch of the realms on high, And

Christians

Now glo - ry to the God whose

with his tramp-ling cha-riot shakes___ The a-zure pave-ment___ of the sky.

throne Far from this world ob - scure and dim,

It has been assumed that Sullivan felt inhibited when writing for the Christians, but unrestrained when portraying the heathen, but this is a gross over-simplification. Nor was Victorian religiosity to

blame; Milman's poem depicts the Christians as a persecuted people (Margaret of Antioch was martyred during the persecution of the emperor Diocletian, who reigned at the beginning of the 4th century AD) and the book that Sullivan and Gilbert fashioned from it, with or without a contribution from Grove, remained faithful to Milman's conception. As Bradley says, the two main choruses for the Christians consist of a funeral hymn (beginning of Scene 2) and a hymn sung by Christian captives who are facing the probability of martyrdom.

Below is given the opening of the 'Funeral Anthem' and this is preceded by a solo passage for the organ.

Ex.3.73 The Martyr of Antioch, Scene 2, 'Funeral Anthem' from bar 1

Andante non troppo lento.

SOPRANO
p
 Bro - ther, thou art gone be - fore us, And thy saint - ly soul is

ALTO
p
 Bro - ther, thou art gone be - fore us, And thy saint - ly soul is

TENOR
p
 Bro - ther, thou art gone be - fore us, And thy saint - ly soul is

BASS
p
 Bro - ther, thou art gone be - fore us, And thy saint - ly soul is
 (For rehearsal only.)

p

Ex.3.74 Sullivan, The Martyr of Antioch, Scene 2, 'Funeral Anthem' conclusion from bar 63

E *sempre f* *cresc.*
 seal thy nar - row bed. But thy spi - rit, bro - ther, soars,

sempre f *cresc.*
 seal thy nar - row bed. But thy spi - rit, bro - ther, soars a-

sempre f *cresc.*
 seal thy nar - row bed. But thy spi - rit, bro - ther, soars

sempre f *cresc.*
 seal thy nar - row bed. But thy spi - rit, bro - ther, soars

sempre f *cresc.*

Where the wick - ed cease from trou - bling, and the wea - ry are at
blest, Where the wea - ry are at

The beginning of this Scene is in the style customary for restrained settings of religious texts, the *locus classicus* being 'God so loved the world' from *The Crucifixion* by Stainer. However, Sullivan succeeds in creating a sense of climax despite the slow pace and nature of the text. By the time he has reached the words, 'But thy spirit, brother, soars', (Letter E above), there is an emphatic modulation to G flat major and rather in the manner of S.S. Wesley in the extract from *The Wilderness* at Ex.3.3.4, the conclusion when it arrives, is unusually powerful, partly because it is intended for unaccompanied voices and because the cadence at the bar before letter F seems so conclusive, despite closing in a key remote from the tonic. The passage which follows gradually returns by stages to E flat major, setting the words 'Where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest'. For Sullivan to remain true to the poetic concept, his settings of both these texts inevitably had to reflect the dramatic circumstances. The nature of the pagan choruses invited the opposite approach and it is interesting that Sullivan wrote nothing for the theatre quite so abandoned as 'Io Paeon', sung by Julia, one of the worshippers of Apollo, in the fourth scene.

Although the work was greeted with enthusiasm, the criticism of the music given to the Christians was balanced by complaints that the work was too lacking in seriousness or should be regarded merely as a pretext for charming music. This recalls the reservations expressed about the chorus 'Let us eat and drink' from *The Prodigal Son* and therefore it is not surprising that Sullivan's final work in the genre should go even further towards a form of secularism or at least one where the religious element was decidedly subsidiary. *The Golden Legend* (1886) based on part of Longfellow's epic poem *Christus*, deals with the opposition of good and evil and the expression of religious faith through sacrifice, but in very different ways from the three previous choral works. This allowed Sullivan to exploit creatively different musical styles and to avoid invidious comparisons being made between them.

Sullivan did not distinguish between genres of music when it came to the technique of composition and in his choral works, certain passages had given rise to unease about the suitability of, what at the time would have been described as, the 'musical tone' that the composer had employed. While the entirely biblical *The Light of the World* had escaped this stricture, even here the Overture that begins Part 2 would not have been out of place in an operatic score. Sullivan was inexorably drawn to a more dramatic subject than the traditional oratorio, as it was then understood, would usually allow. The role of the orchestra was a constant in everything he wrote, whether for the concert hall or the stage. However, elements such as the use of chromaticism or the need to apply an exotic characterisation if required or following the example of older contemporaries such as Berlioz or Liszt were regarded by him as simply among the artistic resources at his disposal, not a means of personal expression.

The subject of his next choral work would still need to be 'earnest in character', as he had described what ultimately became *The Martyr of Antioch*, and in alighting upon the story of Prince Henry of Hohenock, he and his collaborator Joseph Bennett chose a work which would most forcibly appeal to Victorian sensibility. Combined with the strong supernatural element within the story, its success was virtually assured. The result was *The Golden Legend* that proved to be the most successful work of its type between the first performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in Birmingham in 1845 and the first genuinely satisfactory performance of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. The final chapter looks at the work in detail and examines how Sullivan achieved his end and how it relates to the rest of his music.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Golden Legend: A Case Study of a Mid-Victorian Archetype

Preliminary

This chapter is an attempt to form as balanced a view of *The Golden Legend* as possible; noting Sullivan's skill and artistry in the many features of it which still command admiration, but also to examine those comparatively few instances where, for a variety of reasons, Sullivan appears to falter and to try to determine what these may have been. The various aspects of Sullivan's style addressed in the earlier chapters are now discussed specifically in relation to this work. Thus, the features of Sullivan's approach to the role of the orchestra, his use of chromaticism, the influence of some of his older contemporaries and the relationship of the work to other areas of his output are given detailed consideration. Other aspects include Sullivan's depiction of the supernatural and the sea, the evidence of stylistic influences from earlier in his career and the relationship of the music to the operatic genre, although not confined to Sullivan's own examples, but in a wider context. Another topic is a consideration of the composer's choral writing when compared to selected examples from his shorter choral music. Finally, a comparison is made with the other most significant work from Sullivan's final decade, the opera *Ivanhoe* and its impact on the development of Sullivan's later style. The chapter concludes with an account of the reception history of *The Golden Legend* and some discussion as to why it did not maintain its place in the repertory. The music examples are, for the most part, taken from the vocal score.

Sullivan began work on *The Golden Legend* on 24th April 1886 and recorded in his diary that he had made good progress for the first day (Sullivan Diary: 24 April 1886). This was to be his contribution to the Leeds Festival for that year. He had originally been asked by the committee for an orchestral work, preferably a symphony, which he declined to provide. He suggested a shorter choral work that would fill one half of a concert, as *The Prodigal Son* had been designed to do. He was also in some difficulty about what would be a suitable subject. He had informed the committee at the end of the previous year that he was considering three possible subjects, none of which seemed entirely satisfactory (Bradley, 2013: 137). In his autobiography, Joseph Bennett, who was later to provide the libretto for the work, states that it was Flora Chappell, the daughter of the music publisher Tom Chappell, who suggested Longfellow's poem as a possibility (quoted in Bradley, 2013: 137). The difficulties that faced Sullivan in approaching the poem with a view to making a setting are discussed in 2.5, p.112.

Other settings of the poem by Buck and Liszt have already been mentioned, but the earliest appears to be by Edward Henry Hodson (1842—1917), who was a Church of England clergyman and

sometime organist of Worcester College, Oxford. His setting does not bear a date and he acknowledges the assistance of one Francis Geverding (Professor of Music) with the orchestration. While the vocal score for Hodson's work was published by Novello, it seems rarely to have been performed. The chief interest, from the point of view of a comparison with Sullivan's setting, is that the libretto contains a good deal of the same material that Bennett chose when preparing the book for Sullivan. In its own terms, Hodson's is a worthy attempt, but the dramatic impact is weakened by too much reliance on compound time and a musical idiom which, even more than Sullivan's, is unmistakably redolent of its period. Stanford apparently began a setting of the poem, completing it up to the end of Part I, but subsequently abandoned it (Rodmell, 2002: 47). This may partly explain his enthusiasm for the work after its first performance and its reception will be discussed later.

History has recorded that the response to Sullivan's work, at its first performance on 16th October 1886, constituted Sullivan's most conspicuous and prestigious success in the field of serious music. Before examining it in detail, it may be instructive to determine why this should have been so and to seek an explanation for the fact that, for a period of about forty years, it enjoyed a popularity with choral societies and audiences comparable to *Messiah* and *Elijah*. Twentieth-century writers, such as Leslie Baily, in his account of the development of the partnership and the tradition, felt the need to indulge in a certain amount of special pleading where they were sympathetic to Sullivan,

What posterity should remember about Sullivan is that although his serious music has lost prestige until the passing years have brought it a dusty oblivion, in the nineteenth century it did help the music awakening of masses of English people; that is why it was eulogized in terms that now seem extravagant. Present-day standards cannot be applied to the Victorian world (Baily, 1966: 293).

What Baily states above is indeed true, but it is far from being the whole truth; it is only a more palatable way of expressing the same sentiment as Kennedy, who regarded Sullivan's work as merely 'the best of a bad bunch' (Kennedy, 1981: 38). As has already been made clear, it has flaws and Sullivan was not able to sustain the highest level of invention that he achieves in certain passages throughout the entire work. However, its merits more than outweigh the occasional lapses. It deserves to be considered on these without any assessment being unduly coloured by the fact that it was followed within a few years by Elgar's ground-breaking essays in oratorio and through which it suffered by comparison.¹⁴

¹⁴ This was also the fate of the opera *Ivanhoe*, which had been designed as pageant-like in form, rather in the manner of Verdi's *Don Carlos*. This approach was to be swept away by the rise of the Italian *verismo* and the drama-in-music so successfully cultivated by Puccini and others.

At the other extreme, few today are likely to take the contemporary views of the work at face value, partly for the reasons given above by Baily, but also because the time since its first performance enables a more detached view to be taken. The work consists of six scenes framed by a Prologue and an Epilogue, which do not form part of the narrative. Reference is also made to the analytical notes provided by the librettist, Joseph Bennett, for a performance of the work in the Royal Albert Hall in 1894, conducted by Sullivan. These are significant because in them Bennett explains some of the references, both musical and literary and one must assume that his views had the concurrence of the composer. This is as near to a primary source in terms of writings about the work as can be found, and they are reproduced in the short book about the work, published by the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society.

Synopsis

Prince Henry of Hoheneck lies sick and restless at his castle of Voutsberg on the Rhine. He is suffering from an incurable disease and having consulted the renowned doctors of Salerno, he has been told that he can only be cured by the blood of a maiden willing to die for him of her own free will. Believing this remedy to be impossible, the Prince gives way to despair. At this point he is visited by Lucifer in the guise of a traveling physician. He tempts the Prince to try alcohol and having made him inebriated, forces Henry out of his castle as an outcast (Scene 1). He finds shelter in the house of Gottlieb, one of his subjects and Elsie, Gottlieb's daughter, feels such compassion for the Prince that she resolves to die for him to enable him to be restored to health. Her mother, Ursula, tries to dissuade her, but Elsie is resolute (Scene 2). Prince Henry, Elsie and the Prince's entourage set out for medical school at Salerno (Scene 3). On their arrival they are met by Friar Angelo who is Lucifer again disguised. Elsie states that she is willing to die for the Prince, at which point Prince Henry says that he only wanted to put her courage to the proof and had no intention of allowing her to proceed. Lucifer retires with Elsie to an inner chamber to kill her and in doing so, thwart her redemptive intentions, but the Prince and his servants break down the door and she is rescued (Scene 4). Miraculously healed by the exertion of his own courage, the Prince marries Elsie and is restored to his rightful place (Scene 6). The fifth Scene provides an interlude between the events at Salerno and Henry and Elsie's marriage and shows Elsie's mother, Ursula, hearing the news from a Forrester wearing the Prince's livery, that her daughter lives.

What follows is a series of discussions of specific features to be found within the work and how they relate to those mentioned in the earlier sections of the thesis. Other subjects included are aspects of Sullivan's style that are specific to *The Golden Legend* and how they relate to other works in similar genres. Where a certain topic has been discussed earlier in the thesis, page references are given in brackets. The music examples are, for the most part, taken from the vocal score.

4.1 Sullivan's Depiction of the Supernatural

Section 3.3 discusses Sullivan's use of the chromatic idiom in some detail, but the intensity of its use in *The Golden Legend* is rare in Sullivan's music. The chromaticism denotes the alien element, in this case, broadly speaking, the supernatural, but specifically Lucifer and his Powers of the Air. Its brief reappearances later in the work are associated with Prince Henry's illness, which may be interpreted as demonic possession in his case, but it also occurs in Scene 6 when the Prince refers to the illness of Charlemagne's Queen, Fastrada. While Sullivan may have known Liszt's setting of the Prologue, his approach has little in common with it and as shown earlier, he seems to have drawn on Liszt's other works that treat a similar subject matter, such the *Faust Symphony* or the *Mephisto Waltzes*, and this is discussed in 3.4. Taylor in his discussion provides the most detailed analysis of Sullivan's tonal procedures in the Prologue and makes the point that 'the apparent chaos of the prologue is underpinned by a carefully controlled voice-leading framework...' (Taylor, 2018: 137).

In his discussion of *The Golden Legend* Hughes describes the Prologue as including 'pealing bells, *tremolando* diminished sevenths, and repetitions in different keys of a meaningless little six-note quaver figure' (Hughes, 1960: 67), all of which seems to be designed to highlight the absurdity of Sullivan's enterprise. Had he examined the passage more carefully he would have seen that the figure is far from meaningless, since it forms the outline of the tritone with all its associations with the supernatural in music.

The tonic key is G flat major, although Sullivan dispenses with a key-signature, and it is to this tonal centre that the music returns in every statement of the bell theme. At bars 96–97 there is a cadence in F sharp major at the words 'They defy our utmost power'. This is changed enharmonically to G flat major for the next statement of the bell theme set to the words, 'Defunctus ploro!' Lucifer's next phrase is in that key's enharmonic dominant of C sharp major. The music then rises by chromatic steps to D major (bar 110), E flat major, (one bar before Letter J), F major (bar 120), closing at bar 142 on a diminished seventh chord based on F sharp which is again changed enharmonically to G flat major for the next statement of the bell theme by the tenors and basses. Thus, Sullivan completes a chromatic circle between the two statements of the bell theme, each in the same key of G flat major.

A notable feature of the First Scene are the two very brief recollections of the style of the Prologue, referred to earlier, bars 136–44 and bars 209–29, at the words 'A smould'ring, dull, perpetual flame' and 'Purge with your nostrums and drugs infernal, The spouts and gargoyles of these towers, Not me.'

The first example is given below:

Ex.4.1 *The Golden Legend*, Scene 1 from bar 136

Andante Prince Henry

The musical score is for a song by Prince Henry, titled 'The Golden Legend, Scene 1 from bar 136'. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The score is written for voice and piano. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: 'It has no name. A smouldering dull, perpetual crescendo flame.' The score consists of five systems. The first system shows the vocal line and the piano accompaniment. The piano part features a series of sixteenth-note runs in the right hand, with a 'p' (piano) dynamic marking. The second system continues the vocal line and the piano accompaniment. The third system shows the vocal line and the piano accompaniment. The fourth system shows the vocal line and the piano accompaniment. The fifth system shows the vocal line and the piano accompaniment. The piano part features a series of sixteenth-note runs in the right hand, with a 'p' (piano) dynamic marking. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

It has no name. A smould - 'ring dull, per -

pet - - - - - ual

cres - cen - do *molto*

flame.

8va

* *Ped.*

Bradley, in his recent study of the church music, overlooks the fact that the Prince makes it clear that his illness 'has no name' and ascribes it to leprosy. This appears to be due to a misunderstanding of the Prince's words in the poem (not included by Bennett) where he says 'My heart has become a dull lagoon, Which a kind of leprosy drinks and drains', (Longfellow, 1983: 91), but it is clear that the illness is not actually leprosy.

Longfellow's version of the original German folk tale is in the tradition of the Romantic grotesque story, the most famous being Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). Yet the object of romantic agony cannot be agony; it must be resolution, peace or redemption. Therefore, there can be no missing scene in *The Golden Legend*, a complaint made by Jacobs concerning the end of Scene 4, where Elsie escapes death (Jacobs, 1984: 243). Longfellow's original text breaks off in the same way and it would have been unthinkable at the time to have altered the dramatic sequence in any material way, particularly at this point. However, in this connection it is interesting to note that neither Schumann nor Berlioz had any scruples about reordering the chronology of Goethe's text for *Faust* to suit their own purposes. This preference for ambiguity was a notable trait in Longfellow's work and the end of *Hiawatha*, probably his most famous poetic work due to Coleridge-Taylor's setting, is similarly inconclusive.¹⁵

The Victorian audience would have had no difficulty in grasping the theological implications of the story. The Prince's melancholia made him vulnerable to the temptations of Lucifer and into which he fell without offering any resistance. His encounter with Elsie, who was willing to sacrifice her life to save his, broke the diabolical charm under which he had been labouring and enabled him both to defy Lucifer and save Elsie's life. In this connection, it is significant that the brief recollections of the tonal language of the Prologue occur in connection with the mention of the Prince's illness. Sullivan's limited use of *leitmotif*, and the recapitulation of previous thematic material in other connections within the work, rule out the notion that these references are coincidental or a matter of chance.

Performed to an audience, the majority of whom would have assented in their belief in the basic Christian tenets, and who would accept without difficulty the idea of redemption through a self-sacrificing love, the meaning of Longfellow's text would not be as obscure as Jacobs seems to think. It should also be noted that no contemporary critic stated that he found the uncertainty at the end of this Scene a problem or suggested that Bennett should have supplied the apparent deficiency. It is later critics, writing at a time when the acceptance of Christian or any other type of religious principle cannot be taken for granted, who profess to find the Christian ethical assumptions obscure or incomprehensible.

4.2 The Role of the Orchestra

While Sullivan's use of what would have been regarded as an 'advanced' chromatic idiom in the Prologue might be regarded as its most notable feature, his use of the orchestra should not be overlooked. The text given to the Powers of the Air in response to Lucifer's demands is to state their

¹⁵ In Longfellow's poem, it is the Forester (See Scene 5) who reveals that the Prince had been cured miraculously by the relic of St. Matthew, but Bennett omitted this detail.

helplessness in the face of divine power; the windows, and the bells are impervious to their assault. The vocal writing is restricted in range as shown in the excerpt given below,

Ex. 4.2 *The Golden Legend*, the Powers of the Air from the Prologue

Voices: accompaniment omitted

The musical score for Ex. 4.2 is written for two voices. The top staff begins with a *mf* dynamic and a *sf* marking. The bottom staff begins with a *sf* marking. Both staves feature a *dim.* marking. The lyrics are: "O we can-not For a-round it" and "All the saints and guard-ian an-gels Throng in le-gions to pro-tect it;".

By contrast, the orchestral writing surrounding the voices uses the extremes of the orchestral compass as Sullivan vividly depicts the storm. It is the orchestra that dominates the Prologue and the conclusion with the setting of 'Nocte surgentes', for male voices and organ only, provides the strongest possible contrast, both in terms of musical style, but also instrumental colour.

The opening orchestral passage of the second scene introduces another of the recurring themes in the work.

Ex.4.3 *The Golden Legend*, beginning of Scene 2

Andante tranquillo

dolce e legato

The musical score for Ex. 4.3 is a single melodic line in 3/4 time. It begins with a *p* dynamic and a *dolce e legato* marking. The tempo is marked *Andante tranquillo*.

This returns as the fugue subject in the Epilogue, but here it serves as the thematic material in Sullivan's representation of a sunset. This is another one of the sections of the work that has been described as indicative of Sullivan's partiality for sonorities chosen for effect. Eden goes so far as to say that 'outside the works with Gilbert the orchestra and its sonorities become the single most important feature' (Eden, 1986: 165). Shaw, as has already been shown, was a tireless critic of Victorian choral music and advised Parry to burn his oratorio *Job*, but Eden quotes him as being prepared to exempt *The Golden Legend* 'because of the way it expressed the composer's sheer love of sound' (Eden, 1986: 165). This aspect is discussed in detail in 3.1. Ursula's vocal line, when it

enters at bar 38 becomes just another strand in the orchestral texture, in the same manner as the chorus are subservient to the orchestra in the Prologue.

The vision of Christ Elsie describes later in the Scene is what has made her resolve to sacrifice her life. An extract is given at Ex.3.54 on p.203 and a comparison is made with the conclusion of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*, *L'Apotheose de Margarita*. Elsie's prayer that follows at bar 315, finds her alone and it is notable for Sullivan's use of the cor anglais that supplies the only accompaniment until bar 331. Despite the religiosity of the text, Sullivan's music is lyrical without the mawkishness that one might have expected and is on a far higher plane than 'O Gladsome Light'. The use of orchestral colour is again an important stylistic element. Here Sullivan would appear to be anticipating Sibelius, since the closest comparison, purely from the point of view of orchestral colour, would be the later composer's *The Swan of Tuonela*, but even here the cor anglais is not unaccompanied. The use of the instrument to denote melancholy in the case of Sibelius or Elsie's resignation to death in the context of the plot of *The Golden Legend* is the most striking similarity.

Turning to Scene 6, Eden comments that, 'The sixth scene commences with an evocative tone-picture of wedding bells ringing out over the valleys of the Rhine; the love duet which follows is Sullivan's most beautiful achievement in (*sic*) this kind' (Eden, 1986: 173). Below is a keyboard reduction of the opening of the Scene.

Ex.4.4. The Golden Legend, Scene 6, bars 1 to 7

Andante tranquillo

The musical score is a keyboard reduction of the opening of Scene 6 from *The Golden Legend*, bars 1 to 7. It is marked *Andante tranquillo*. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is written for piano, with a melody in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. The first system covers bars 1-4, and the second system covers bars 5-7. The score includes dynamic markings like 'p' and 'p.' and articulation like 'Ped.' and asterisks. The first system covers bars 1-4, and the second system covers bars 5-7.

The key is D flat major which is significant given that this also the key of Elsie's vision and Rushton's comment about the nineteenth-century hierarchy of keys (See page 27). In terms of the design of the work, the use of bells acts as a kind of opposite counterpart to the bells of a very different character heard in the Prologue, although what Elsie and Prince Henry are hearing are not, in fact, wedding bells at all, but

the bells of Geisenheim,
That with their melancholy chime
Ring out the curfew of the sun.
(Longfellow, 1983: 155)

that were heard by Charlemagne and his queen Fastrada. Again, Sullivan's use of orchestral colour is an important stylistic factor. Apart from the bells, the opening 26 bars of the scene consist of 'an elaborate wood-wind ensemble ... [where]... (the piccolo) is endowed with something like dignity on the independent top line' (Hughes, 1960: 103). Sullivan also uses this material to supply interludes during the scene, such as at bar 33, a modified version of the opening passage of the movement. A similar passage occurs at bar 47, but in the key of E major.

4.3 Sullivan's Use of the Chromatic Idiom

The Prologue shows Sullivan's use of chromaticism at its most extrovert. Indeed, in terms of style, it is unique in his output, for both its tonal freedom and the fact that it is sustained for approximately ten minutes, but without overstepping the boundary into atonality, despite Hughes's comment to the contrary. In Scene 5 there is an instance of Sullivan using a similar, if less intense tonal language for a subtler expressive purpose.

Ursula's prayer of thanksgiving for Elsie's deliverance at first glance appears to be in a simple, artless style, almost naïve. The musical language is initially mostly diatonic, save for a step-wise chromatic approach to the fifth degree of the scale which occurs twice within four bars, as shown below;

Ex.4.5 *The Golden Legend*, Scene 5 from bar 79

bar 79

If the loud cry of a mother's heart Can e - ver as - cend_ to where thou art,

The vocal line has moved mostly by step, but at bar 98 Sullivan introduces a chromatic ostinato two-bar bass figure, which gradually climbs by step (in whole tones) with each repetition. At bars 104 and 105 Sullivan breaks the phrase into two one-bar units, followed by a two-bar phrase, then two one-bar phrases. At bars 110–11 he introduces a tie between the fourth and first quavers of two bars and repeats it two bars later. Ursula's vocal line, having moved largely by step in the first section, begins to move in gradually wider intervals as the music becomes more chromatic, moving away from the tonic of E major to F sharp minor, then G sharp minor and then by an enharmonic twist to E flat major. At bar 115, the climax arrives on a dominant seventh chord approached in the previous bar by the chord of the augmented sixth. It is worth noting that this is not a climax of height; Stanford in his book *Musical Composition* has this to say on the question of melody writing: 'All good themes are in curves and tend towards one striking moment which forms the culminating point of the melody. It need not necessarily be a climax of height: it need only be the outstanding main feature of the whole melody' (Stanford, 1920: 38).

This passage illustrates very well Stanford's point.

Ex.4.6 *The Golden Legend*, Scene 5 from bar 113

The musical score for Ex.4.6 shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the scene. The vocal line is in E-flat major (three flats) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "bless her, Dear Elsie, child of God and grace,". The piano accompaniment features a chromatic ostinato in the bass line, which is highlighted with a red bracket and a red 'x' mark. The piano part also includes a tie between the fourth and first quavers of two bars, marked with a red 'x' and a red asterisk.

In the approach in the previous bar, the B flat in the vocal line corresponds to the A sharp in the orchestral chord. At the point where the dominant seventh chord is reached, Sullivan quotes the beginning of Ursula's prayer in octaves in the strings.

It is instructive to compare this passage with that in Scene 2 at bar 332, where Elsie makes her own prayer. The similarity in style is unmistakeable and almost certainly intentional, specifically the step-wise melodic writing. As in the passage sung by Ursula, the prayer builds in fervour reaching the climax at bar 350 and this *is* a climax of height, being the highest sustained note that Elsie sings in this section. Elsie's prayer is also in three time rather than two, but the similarity is sufficiently close to denote a relationship, as it were, between the two.

At bar 127 in Scene 5, Sullivan repeats the opening of the prayer in a changed form, using the chromatic approach to the fifth degree of the scale as he did twice in the opening section, but not in setting these words. The Scene ends with words, 'Our child who was dead again is living', but in a slightly altered form from that given at the approach to bars 96–97.

While Scene 6 is notable for both Sullivan's use of orchestral colour and for being almost the only example of a romantic quasi-operatic duet in his output, the middle section also contains an example of the composer's tonal dexterity. Prince Henry is telling Elsie the legend of Charlemagne's Queen, Fastrada, her death and the king's grief. At bar 91 the key of A flat major has been established, but at bar 98 Sullivan begins to move away from this key, making use of another enharmonic twist, with D flat becoming C sharp; by bar 107 the music is in the key of the flattened supertonic, as used in another duet in Act 1 of *Ruddigore*, one of the moments in the comic operas in which they most closely approach their serious counterparts. (See Ex.3.48 on p. 193)

Ex.4.7 *The Golden Legend*, Scene 6 from bar 101

bar 101 Prince Henry

And the great monarch sat serene And sad beside the fated shore,

un poco cres.

At bar 109 (the last bar of the quotation above) the E natural and A natural in the bass give way respectively to F natural and A flat and within two bars, Sullivan has regained the submediant of A flat major. At bar 136 the passage is repeated almost exactly but terminating in a return to the tonic of D flat major. The coda of thirty bars includes a short passage at bar 171 which is the expressive climax and again Sullivan moves briefly to the flattened supertonic before closing in the tonic key at bar 179.

4.4 The Evidence of Berlioz's Influence

With his first vocal entry Prince Henry enlarges on his malady, rather in the same manner as Faust, indeed, in this Scene Longfellow/Bennett most closely approach the Goethe model. At the appearance of Lucifer there is a flash of lightning, depicted by Sullivan by the orchestral wind and Sullivan presents the first of his recurring themes, one associated exclusively with Lucifer, quoted at Ex.3.53 (a), p.166. Here Sullivan appears to be following Berlioz's example in *The Damnation of Faust*, since Berlioz introduces Lucifer in a similar way. (Ex.3.53 (b))

Lucifer's musical signature is a vigorous diatonic theme scored for wind in triple time with the occasional bar of 2/4. In other words, it is in a style that is the opposite of the chromaticism of the Prologue, where, of course, he appeared in his true form rather than disguised. In his notes Bennett says that 'The Tempter never appears after the Prologue, save in the disguise of a learned or saintly profession. This seems to have determined the composer upon a step characteristic of the humour which all the world knows him to possess. "Doctor" Lucifer must needs be accompanied by scholastic music, conceived in the spirit of a time when the art was studied as a science' (Gordon-Powell, 2012: 66).

Ex.4.8 *The Golden Legend*, Scene 1 from bar 99

(A flash of lightning, out of which Lucifer appears, in the garb of a travelling Physician)

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system shows a piano introduction in 3/4 time, D-flat major. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic and transitioning to mezzo-forte (*mf*) with a staccato (*stacc.*) marking. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. The second system introduces the vocal part for Lucifer, who enters with the lyrics "All hail, Prince Henry!". The vocal line is in the bass clef, and the piano accompaniment continues in the right and left hands.

As remarked earlier, the main influence of Berlioz to be found in Sullivan's work is the broad concept; both *The Golden Legend* and *La Damnation de Faust* are quasi-operatic choral works that are episodic in form. The parallels between Sullivan's Prologue and Berlioz's *Course à l'Abîme* have also been discussed with both composer's demonstrating what Primmer refers to as 'an extreme example of the tonal complexity made possible by...an expanded musical grammar (Primmer 1973: 75). While it may not be possible to establish beyond doubt that Sullivan knew and used Berlioz's book on orchestration, there is enough circumstantial evidence to suggest a strong probability. Even Hughes, no admirer of the work, says that 'the orchestration throughout is worthy of Berlioz' (Hughes, 1960: 67).

Another similarity occurs in the way both Berlioz and Sullivan treat what might be described as the spiritual transfiguration of their heroine. In Section 3.4 a direct comparison is made between Scene 2 of *The Golden Legend* where Elsie describes her vision and the *Apothéose de Marguerite* from *La Damnation de Faust*. Both are in the key of D flat major and have a similar function within the narrative. Elsie is explaining to her mother, Ursula, the spiritual justification for her self-sacrifice, the determination to give up her life for another; it is from this statement of her intent that the rest of the drama follows. In the case of Marguerite, her justification occurs after her condemnation as a parricide and her abandonment by Faust.

The end of Part II of Berlioz's work contains the superimposition of the Soldiers' Chorus and the Students' Song, a much more daring example of dual tonality than may be found in almost any other nineteenth-century work. Sullivan's imposition of Lucifer's monologue against the Pilgrims' Hymn in Scene 3 is a less extreme example of the same technique, but with significant differences from those instances to be found in Sullivan's comic operas.

In considering Sullivan's debts to the older generation of composers, the strong impression made by the music of Schumann, Mendelssohn and Schubert has been discussed in some detail and given that the traces of their influence are to be found in the music Sullivan wrote at the beginning of his career, this is only to be expected. The significance of Berlioz's later influence is that it occurs in the most important serious work of Sullivan's maturity. The opera *Ivanhoe* of five years later is almost completely bereft of stylistic influences other than Sullivan's adaptation of the *idée fixe* that he uses in the opera in a way like its use in *The Golden Legend*. Berlioz appears to be the most important figure in Sullivan's stylistic development after his years in Leipzig.

4.5 The Relationship of the Music to the Operatic Genre

Of all Sullivan's choral works, *The Golden Legend* mostly closely approaches the operatic genre, with its strong narrative sweep, the stage directions and the opportunities the subject afforded Sullivan of tonal scene-setting. However, while there are stylistic correspondences with the comic operas, they are confined to the two which followed the choral work, namely *Ruddigore* and *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

Elsie's namesake in the latter has a solo towards the end of the finale to Act 2 that seems to owe something to the earlier work. Hughes notes this: 'Not only are both songs in D flat major with an accompaniment of repeated string chords (quavers in slow 12/8 time); both make an unexpected transition to D major before reaching their climax on a conventional 6-4' (Hughes, 1960: 68).

In addition, the chromatically rising harmony at the words, 'In snow-white robes uprising, The ghostly choirs respond, corresponds to a very similar passage at Elsie's words 'My bruised heart, My broken heart, Is thine, my own, for aye!' as shown below:

Ex.4.9 Sullivan, *The Golden Legend*, Scene 3, bars 360 to 364

SOPRANO
ALTO

TENOR
BASS

In snow - white robes up -
(sea) In snow - white robes up -
In snow - white
In snow - white
ris - ing The ghost - ly choirs re - spond And
ris - ing The ghost - ly choirs re - spond, And
robes up - ris - ing, The
robes up - ris - ing, The

The rising chromatic chords are almost identical in the two passages; in the comic opera, it is a series of chords in first inversion shown here in the accompaniment. In the cantata, the real bass is in the orchestra, supporting the choral forces also with a tonic chord in first inversion. The passage leading to this harmonic sequence clearly shows the similarity from bar 308 of Scene 3 in the cantata to the beginning of the passage from the opera quoted below, which is a self-contained section from the Finale to Act 2.

Ex.4.10 Sullivan, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Finale to Act 2, from bar 111 to 123

Andante espressivo e con moto

Leon - nard, my lov'd one Come to me They

dim. *p* Ped *

bear_ me_hence a - way!____ But though they take me

far from thee, My heart_ is_ thine_ for

aye! My bruis - ed heart, My

bro - - - ken heart, Is

thine, my own, for aye! Is

Below is a section from Scene 4, sung just before Elsie is to sacrifice herself. This passage has attracted almost as much criticism as 'O Gladsome Light' from Scene 2 on the same grounds, namely its excessive sentimentality. On page 255 there is a discussion of Sullivan's shorter choral music to which in style it bears some resemblance. Young, in his discussion of Sullivan's early songs, remarks that he was not among the composers who could (as Purcell often did), overcome the disadvantage of having to set an indifferent text. While sensitive 'to the values inherent in fine poetry...and capable of transferring these values to music, he was even more sensitive to bad poetry, the shortcomings of which he was also masterly in exposing. Often this came down to a kind of nescient neutrality' (Young, 1971: 80). This may justly be said to apply some portions of the choral music, such as the following passage from Scene 4.

Ex.4.11 Sullivan, *The Golden Legend*, Scene 4, bar 111 to 133

SOPRANO
ALTO

TENOR
BASS

p O pure in heart! O pure in heart! from thy sweet dust shall grow -

dim Li-lies, *f* up - on whose pet-als will be writ-ten "A - ve Ma -

Ma ri a in cha - rac-ters of gold!

ri - a in cha - rac-ters of gold! O pure in heart, O

pure in heart, O pure in heart, O

pure in heart!

In the comic operas Sullivan could use such an idiom to achieve a contrast, akin to bathos in some cases, but deliberately so. The chorus 'Hail Poetry' from *The Pirates of Penzance* would be one example and 'I hear the soft note of the echoing voice' from the Finale to Act 1 of *Patience* is another, in this case a closer comparison, being similar in style to the example from *The Golden Legend*, which is mostly quiet and reflective. However, it does include towards its end a clear parody of Henry Smart's hymn tune written for the words 'The Pilgrims of the Night', which places it in a slightly different category.

To examine this passage in detail one should place it in context; the previous opening passage of the Scene has been in the key of A major and the heroine, Elsie, has confirmed her resolve to die for Prince Henry. This short chorus is the comment of the crowd reacting to Elsie's words 'I come not here to argue, but to die'. This passage closes on what would be the dominant of F sharp major, but Sullivan chooses to make an enharmonic change and the key signature becomes G flat major. Despite the 4-bar orchestral introduction to the passage, the tonic key is not properly established, and the music remains tonally ambiguous until it closes in bar 22.

The reasons for this are that the first chord is a tonic chord in the second inversion, sounding rather as though it would wish to close in D flat major. This effect is heightened by Sullivan's use of numerous seventh chords, as shown above in the first 5 bars. The music appears to revolve around the second inversion chord of the tonic and the result is undeniably weak. In bar 7 Sullivan avoids using another dominant seventh by substituting an augmented tonic chord as a chromatic move to the subdominant (C flat major). However, by bar 11 the harmony has returned to the tonic second inversion where it remains until there is another brief move to the subdominant at bar 16. The melodic repetitions at bars 18 and 19 weaken the effect of the passage still further and the resolution finally comes at bar 22, when the dominant seventh at last comes to rest on the tonic chord of G flat major.

It is curious that despite a rich choral texture, where both the altos and basses divide, one is not aware of any emotional impact whatever, largely, it must be said, because of the poor quality of the words. Unfortunately, Sullivan confronted with mawkish words, could produce equally mawkish music, but rarely did this happen in his stage works.

A comparison with a short choral passage that appears to be similar in character from one of the operas, at least superficially, is illuminating. This occurs early in Act 1 of the *Utopia Limited* where the two daughters of King Paramount, the Princesses Nekaya and Kalyba, are presented to his subjects and 'shall daily be exhibited in public, that all may learn what, from the English standpoint, is looked upon as maidenly perfection!' The chorus respond with the passage quoted below, commenting on events in the same way as the chorus in *The Golden Legend* when Elsie maintains her resolution to die for the Prince.

Ex.4.12 Sullivan, *Utopia Ltd.* No.4 (a) at bar 67

Chorus (doubled by strings to bar 9)

How fair! how mod-est! how dis creet! How bash-ful ly de - mure! See how they

blush, as they've been taught, At this pub - li - ci - ty un - sought! How

Eng - lish and how pure! How Eng - lish and how pure!

However, there are some important stylistic differences; the tonic key is clear from the outset as it begins with a tonic chord in root position and proceeds in an effective rising sequence coming to rest on the dominant in root position at bar 5. Sullivan here again uses repetition, but much more effectively; the rising harmonic sequence is repeated, but instead of leading to the dominant, falls to the mediant at bar 9. The penultimate phrase is a climax of height placed on a dominant seventh in E flat in its first inversion, before closing very satisfactorily in the tonic of B flat.

Sullivan seems here to achieve more by a much greater economy of means. Alan Jefferson offers a comparison with Schubert, but perhaps Schumann might be a more likely source. Sullivan maintains the four-part harmony throughout, but the use of modified repetition leading to two different harmonic destinations, the dominant the first time and the mediant the second time, is very simple, but effective. We are spared the hovering over the tonic second inversion chord that is such a noticeable feature of the passage from *The Golden Legend*, one that sounds tonally insecure in any event. The words are quite unpretentious, and Sullivan provides music for them that is wholly suitable and, in its way, entirely satisfying. There is no great emotional weight here, but that was not the intention, whereas in 'O Pure in Heart', Sullivan misses anything approaching true pathos by a considerable margin, which, if the words are taken seriously, was surely his aim.

The previous Scene having closed in the key of D flat major, the beginning of the Epilogue opens in the submediant of the new tonic key E major, modulating to the dominant and then moving to the

tonic. This final movement sets only a few lines from the much more substantial close to the poem provided by Longfellow. Hughes memorably describes it as ‘Bizet shaking hands with Mendelssohn in an atmosphere of muscular Christianity’ (Hughes, 1960: 66). As with other of Hughes’ pronouncements, there is a grain of truth in what otherwise one might be tempted to dismiss merely as a neat piece of phrase-making. The broad melody to which Sullivan sets the words, ‘God sent His messenger the rain’ may suggest Bizet and the fugal treatment of the first four bars of Scene 2, set here to the words, ‘The deed divine is written in characters of gold’, would correspond to Hughes’ naming of Mendelssohn as a likely source of inspiration. It would be as well to test to what extent these are justified by the evidence.

Sullivan had been aware of Bizet from early in his career. Hughes identifies a passage, in the style of a Barcarolle, from the introduction to Act II of *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879) as showing Bizet’s influence. *Carmen* had been produced at L’Opera Comique in Paris in 1875. Hughes goes on to suggest the following passage (from Act 2 of *H M S Pinafore*) is similarly indebted and may be compared to the writing for the male chorus from the opening of Act 3 of Bizet’s opera.

Ex.4.13 Sullivan, *H M S Pinafore*, Act 2, No.18, from the beginning

Tenors and Basses

pp

Care-ful - ly on tip - toe steal - ing, Breath - ing

gent - ly as we may, Ev' - ry step with cau - tion

Ex.4.14 Bizet, *Carmen*, beginning of Act 3, from bar 39 to 42

Bar 39 Tenors and Bases

(orchestral accompaniment omitted)

The following passage from the Finale to Act 2 of *Les Pêcheurs du Perles* (1863) most closely suggests itself as a possible model for Sullivan's unison melody stated at the opening of the Epilogue. It is also in compound time and Bizet supplies an arpeggiated accompaniment, laid out somewhat differently from Sullivan's. Unusually the chorus is in three parts rather than four, but the sopranos and tenors are often singing together an octave apart, resulting in two real parts. For comparison the opening of Sullivan's movement is also given, where Sullivan maintains the unison writing until the beginning of the fugal exposition, returning to unison for the climax of the movement and indeed the work. As will be seen in the section on the reception of the work, this was identified by Stanford as a potential weakness, as it frustrated the expectations stimulated by the employment of counterpoint. He also felt that the melody and harmonies could have been more distinguished. Both Sullivan and Bizet use an economy of means to achieve their effects.

Ex.4.15 Bizet, *Le Pecheurs de Perles*, Finale to Act 2, bar 76 to 83

Bar 76 *mf*

S. O nuit d'é - pou - van - te La mer è - cu

mf

8 T. O nuit d'è - pou - van - te

mf

B. O nuit d'é - pou - van - te

Orchestra

man - te Sou - - lève en gron -

cresc.

La mer é - cu - man - - te

La mer é - cu - man - - te

Ex.4.16 Sullivan, *The Golden Legend*, Epilogue from bar 14 to bar 19

Bar 14 Chorus Tenors and Bases

mf God sent His mes - en - ger, the rain, And
siad un - to the moun - - tain brook, _____

It is interesting to compare Sullivan and Bizet obtaining similar results by rather different means, but the similarities are discernible.

4.6 A Comparison Between *The Golden Legend* and Selected Examples of Sullivan's Shorter Choral Music

When discussing *The Golden Legend*, Hughes stigmatises some of the choral writing as being, 'in his own worst Moody-and-Sankey tradition' (Hughes, 1960: 66). In fact, Sullivan never stooped to the harmonic crudities of Ira D. Sankey's (1840—1908) hymn tunes in his shorter choral works or his hymn tunes. The usual fault was a lack of enterprise and a too ready acceptance of the current fashion in writing for choirs where the level of technical skill was unlikely to be high. His setting of part of Psalm 31, 'O Love the Lord' (1864), is dedicated to his composition teacher, Sir John Goss, and, doubtless as a compliment to the older man, partakes of his compositional style, as shown in the two passages given below which are the opening bars of Sullivan's anthem, followed by the those of Goss's setting of part of Psalm 34, 'O Taste and See'. Both are in the key of E major and adopt a restricted style of writing which is large unexceptionable, but hardly inspiring. In particular, the rhythmic treatment of the words is disappointing when compared to some of Sullivan's more audacious settings in his stage works and songs for voice and piano. The harmonic language too is decidedly unenterprising when compared to examples in other parts of his output, with only a modulation to the mediant minor (G sharp minor) closing at bar 23, to provide a welcome brief moment of variety.

Ex.4.17 'O Love the Lord', Sullivan, bars 1 to 8

Smoothly, and not too slowly

p

O love the Lord. all ye—— His saints; for the

Lord pre - serv - eth them that are faith - ful, and

Ex.4.18 'O Taste and See', Goss, bars 1 to 9

Andante, e con espressione

p

O taste and see how gra - cious the Lord is,

bless - ed is the man that trust - eth in Him. O

An instance of where Sullivan writes in a similar vein to the weaker choral sections in *The Golden Legend* is to be found in his setting of verses from Psalm 51, 'Turn Thy Face from my Sins' (1878). The voices enter a bar 4 and immediately one is aware that several Sullivan's compositional habits have fatally combined to produce a work of a type that did so much to damage his reputation. At least the earlier example, discussed above, had the merit of unpretentiousness and a certain naïve simplicity. In this case the suspicion crosses the mind that Sullivan was not really trying or was responding to a commercial imperative. After an introduction of four bars that serves only to establish the tonic key of E flat, the voices enter.

Ex.4.19 ‘Turn Thy Face from my sins’, Sullivan, bars 5 to 14

Bar 5 *Andante espressivo*

p Turn Thy Face from my sins, and put out all my mis - deeds, Make me a clean heart, O

p

cresc. *mf* *dim.*

God, and re - new a right spir - it with - in me

The vocal rhythm is almost identical to that used in the Overture *In Memoriam*, but without the anacrusis. As discussed earlier, this occurs many times in Sullivan’s output in several contexts. Here it is combined with a tonic pedal, another of Sullivan’s stylistic habits, and a harmonic sequence which appears to be derived from the opening phrases of ‘O, for the wings of a dove’ from Mendelssohn’s ‘Hear My Prayer’. This may be compared to the setting of ‘O Gladsome Light’ that has previously been discussed at some length. Again, one finds the reliance on a tonic pedal and the rhythmic uniformity found in the anthems already mentioned. It is likely that it would be the instances of this type of writing that Hughes would have had in mind when reviewing the cantata in the course of writing his book. While Sullivan certainly had a more sophisticated approach to harmony than that of Ira D. Sankey, it must be admitted that the point Hughes makes is not without a certain justice.

4.7 Sullivan’s Depiction of the Sea

In Scene 3 the sound of the pilgrims’ hymn gradually fades and gives way to a seascape and an effective passage of descriptive writing; ‘It is the sea, it is the sea, In all its vague immensity’, quoted at Ex.1.9, p.77. Young says, ‘The seascape...is finely done. Backed by a Schubertian security Sullivan sets a broad sweep of melody amid the shifting light of harmonically contrasted arpeggios. There is a suggestion here of the best of Stanford; and it is not surprising that Stanford found much to praise in the oratorio’ (*sic*) (Young, 1971: 223). Presumably, Young had in mind the more reflective of the *Songs of the Sea* Op 91 or *Songs of the Fleet* Op 117. The third song of the last set, *The Middle Watch*, has perhaps something of the same atmosphere.

Ex.4.14 Stanford, *Songs of the Fleet*, 'The Middle Watch', bar 9 to 13

sempre pp

SOPRANO With gold - en lights that

sempre pp

ALTO With gold - en lights that

sempre pp

TENOR With gold - en lights that

sempre pp

BASS With gold - en lights that

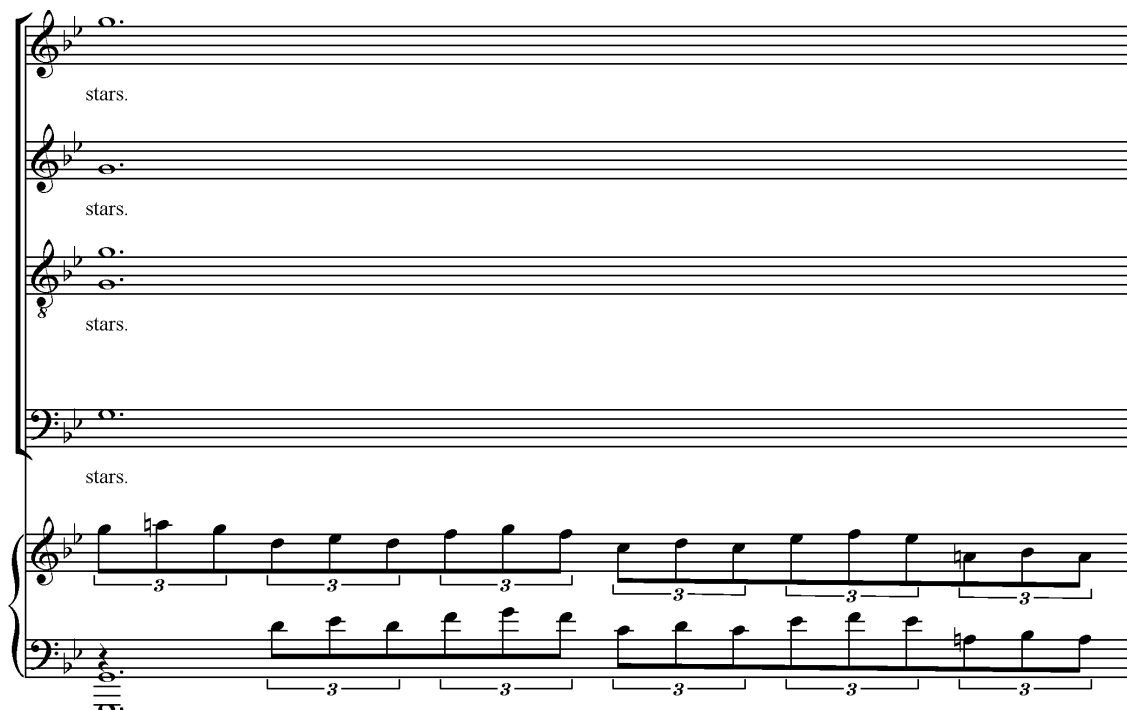
Orchestra

seem to burn a - mong the sil - ver

seem to burn a - mong the sil - ver

seem to burn a - mong the sil - ver

seem to burn a - mong the sil - ver



Stanford's constant use of triplets recalls the compound time semiquaver groups used by Sullivan. Rodmell says of this song that it 'paints an eerie picture of the sea at night using simple undulating triplets, long-held pedals and slowly descending bass lines' (Rodmell, 2002: 268), a description which could equally be applied to Sullivan's music at this point. It is also pertinent to compare this later example of Sullivan's evocation of the sea to the opening of his incidental music to *The Tempest* discussed on pages 76-77.

4.8 Indications of Earlier Stylistic Influences

The Scene begins with a short introduction, of which the librettist Joseph Bennett says is expressive of 'the agitation and despair of the sick and sleepless Prince' (ed. Gordon-Powell, 2012: 65). Hughes states that 'we are reminded of Parry...especially in the short introduction to Scene 1 and in parts of Scene 2...' (Hughes, 1960:66). Given Sullivan's preferences in matters of style, a more likely source may be this passage from Schumann's *Scenes from Faust*, the conclusion of Part 2, which follows the death of Faust. This is the opening of Sullivan's Scene 1 followed by the passage immediately after Faust has died, from Schumann's work:

Ex.4.3 Sullivan, *The Golden Legend*, the opening of Scene 1

The musical score for Sullivan's *The Golden Legend*, the opening of Scene 1, is in 3/4 time, marked *Allegro* and *ff*. The score is written for piano and features a right-hand melody and a left-hand accompaniment. The right-hand melody consists of eighth notes, while the left-hand accompaniment consists of triplets. The key signature changes from G major to E major and then to C major. The score consists of three systems of staves.

Ex.4.4 Schumann, *Scenes from Faust*, Scene 6, bars 234 to 238

The musical score for Schumann's *Scenes from Faust*, Scene 6, bars 234 to 238, is in 3/4 time, marked *sfz*. The score is written for piano and features a right-hand melody and a left-hand accompaniment. The right-hand melody consists of eighth notes, while the left-hand accompaniment consists of triplets. The key signature changes from G major to E major and then to C major. The score consists of two systems of staves.

The rhythm in the Schumann extract has some similarity to Sullivan's in his First Scene, although notated a little differently and the agitated quavers are falling rather than rising, but the two passages fulfil a similar function within the context of the work and both are followed by recitative. However, it must be admitted that there is no direct evidence of Sullivan's knowledge of the work beyond his known admiration for Schumann's music. The most that can be said is that it is likely that Sullivan knew the work.

In the case of Mendelssohn's influence, both *Elijah* and *St Paul* were regarded as the ultimate paradigm for a choral work in nineteenth century Britain. In particular, the choruses where fugal techniques are used tend to be based on short, compact subjects such as the following from the final chorus of *Elijah* followed by the final fugal section of the last chorus of *St Paul*.

Ex.4.29 Mendelssohn, fugue subjects from the final movements of (a) *Elijah* and (b) *St Paul*

(a)



(b)



Sullivan's subject is similarly short and compact and, as has been noted, was used in the introduction to Scene 2 and is given below.

Ex.4.30 Sullivan, *The Golden Legend*, fugue subject from the Epilogue at bar 73



In the eighth chapter of his book, Hughes discusses counterpoint in Sullivan's music and expresses the view that, 'Though Sullivan never wrote a *bad* fugue, perhaps only in the Epilogue to *The Golden Legend* did he complete a really satisfying one' (Hughes' emphasis, 1960: 73). He adds, 'even this hardly accorded with text-book requirements, for he struck unorthodox chords by harmonising the first statement of the subject.' However, in the fugal conclusions to both *Elijah* ('Lord, our Creator, how excellent Thy name') and *St Paul* ('Bless thou the Lord, O my soul'), Mendelssohn follows the same procedure. Hughes goes on to commend Sullivan for introducing the theme with which the Epilogue opened (given to the trombones) between the *stretto* and the unison chorale, but which did not form part of the fugue itself. This too has a precedent in Mendelssohn. In the Overture to *St Paul*, Mendelssohn begins by quoting the Lutheran chorale 'Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme'. The fugal exposition follows in A minor and is worked out at some length culminating in an extended dominant pedal. This gives way to a change of tonality to A major, when the chorale is stated *fortissimo* by the brass. However, the chorale is first stated by the trombones at bar 54 of the

exposition and forms an integral part of the fugue. Although the scale of Sullivan's Epilogue is considerably smaller than Mendelssohn's Overture, the similarity in their use of their musical material is striking.

The final statement of the opening theme of the Epilogue, that forms the climax of the movement, is reduced to the last 13 bars. Stanford in his detailed discussion of the work, identified a weakness in the climax, which he expressed thus:

The melody is broad and developed, I admit; the fugue is, as far as it is worked out, smooth and clear; the finale grandiose and full of sonority; and still I venture to think that the composer could have written a more distinguished melody with more distinguished harmonies to accompany it, and that if his design was for a *monophonic* close, he would have done more wisely to avoid the desire for polyphony which his introduction of a fugue creates. The mixture of styles seems to damage the design. (Stanford's emphasis) (Stanford, 1908: 167-68)

There is a certain justice in Stanford's comment. Had Sullivan adopted Mendelssohn's method more consistently he would have maintained the contrapuntal texture until the end of the movement. At the conclusion of the final chorus of *St Paul*, Mendelssohn only returns to harmony for the last twelve bars or so and generally uses the choral unison very sparingly.

Sullivan's decision does seem to recall the end of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, which concludes with a final statement of the theme of the Pilgrim's Chorus in unison in the key of E flat, although earlier in the opera and in the Overture, it appears in E major, the key of Sullivan's Epilogue. The orchestral accompaniment is similarly elaborate, but the figuration is rather different. It is, perhaps, this want of sensitivity on Sullivan's part in such matters that might be thought to weaken his standing as a composer of serious music, rather than what was later to be regarded as his concessions to popular taste, such as 'O Gladsome Light'.

4.9 The Golden Legend Compared to *Ivanhoe* and the Development of Sullivan's Later Style.

While *The Golden Legend* may have a claim to be considered Sullivan's most successful serious work, the opera *Ivanhoe* is almost as strong a contender for the title. In terms of Sullivan's development as a composer, its impact was enormous. Almost everything that Sullivan wrote for the stage in the years following it showed traces of the experience that he gained while writing it. In some respects, it stands apart from the rest of his output, not simply because it was his only serious stage work, but because, uniquely, it has very little relationship to anything that he wrote before it but coloured almost everything that succeeded it.

In terms of the harmonic style Sullivan uses, there is a simplicity, almost a purity, not to mention a consistency which is remarkable. There is a complete absence of the solecisms that attracted

criticism in the cantata, although, as might expected, Sullivan makes full use of chromatic harmony and enharmonic modulations such as are also found in *The Golden Legend*. Again, he makes an extensive use of the tonic pedal and does not hesitate to draw upon his experience gained when writing the choral work, including some of the harmonic traits derived from Liszt.

In his chapter 'Contrast and Unity in the Score of *Ivanhoe*' in The Sir Arthur Sullivan Society's volume devoted to a study of the opera edited by David Eden, Martin Yates makes the point that, 'Sullivan, with his twin compositional aims of contrast and unity, forms the work into a far more consistent and homogeneous structure than has previously been acknowledged by commentators' (Eden, 2007: 50). It is also the case that it meant that the subsequent operas that Sullivan wrote with collaborators other than Gilbert, bore strong indications of the influence of *Ivanhoe*. These were *The Beauty Stone* (1898) and *The Rose of Persia* (1899). Both make use of the technique of thematic allusion first to be found in *The Golden Legend* and later in *Ivanhoe*, where the groups of characters, such as the Normans, Saxons and the Templars are given musical signatures, in addition to individual personages such as Rowena, Isaac and Rebecca. Both the late operas mentioned above adopt this technique which provides a degree of stylistic unity which is not a feature of the earlier productions at the Savoy. As *The Emerald Isle* (1901) was completed by Edward German, it really must be excluded from the discussion of Sullivan's later style.

4.10 Reception

It was remarked earlier that much depended on the success of *The Golden Legend*. Sullivan felt that time was not on his side and that his bid for what would universally be regarded as legitimate artistic success had to be made at this time and at Leeds. Jacobs says that 'Rarely can a new English work and its performance have won such acclaim' (Jacobs, 1984: 242). He quotes the *Leeds Mercury* who reported the event in the following terms:

How can we describe the scene which followed the last note of the cantata! (*sic*) Let the reader imagine an audience rising to its multitudinous feet in thundering approval; a chorus either cheering with heart and soul or raining down flowers upon the lucky composer; and an orchestra coming out of their habitual calm to wax fervid in demonstration. Never was a more heartfelt ovation. Ovation! Nay, it was a greater triumph, one such as acclaimed the successful soldiers of Rome (Jacobs, 1984: 242).

The critic of *The Daily Telegraph* (which was likely to have been Bennett, notwithstanding his being the author of the libretto) said that 'a greater, more legitimate and more undoubted triumph than that of the new cantata has not been achieved within my experience' (Jacobs, 1984: 242).

Sir Charles Stanford, writing in the *National Review*, a journal which did not usually carry music criticism, contributed a lengthy critique of the work in which he discussed it in detail and to which

reference has already been made. He observed that ‘the suddenness of Elsie’s resolve to sacrifice herself before the listener has fairly had time to grasp the nature of her character, might have been surmounted with greater ease...with great advantage to the composer’ (Stanford, 1908: 160). He goes on to point out that an excerpt from the third scene of Longfellow’s poem would have supplied the deficiency. He was persuaded that *The Golden Legend* would ‘find a place in the shelves of the classics’ (Stanford, 1908: 156), but concluded by saying that,

It is natural, nay more, it is right, that in the Paradise of Music, as in other Paradises, there should be more rejoicing over Sullivan’s great and legitimate success, than over the works of the ninety and nine just composers who have remained uninfluenced (perhaps because untempted) by considerations of profit and popularity (Stanford, 1908: 167).

It seems clear that Sir Charles regarded himself as one who had no need of repentance, but it is worth bearing in mind that this was written some years before the production of his own most successful stage work, *Shamus O’Brien* (1896), which was a comic opera.

Bradley states that, ‘With 17 performances within a year of its triumphant premiere in Leeds on 16 October 1886, *The Golden Legend* ousted Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* as the second most performed work in Britain after Handel’s *Messiah*, a position which it continued to occupy for around 25 years’ (Bradley, 2013: 139). However, Jacobs, posing the rhetorical question, ‘did the constraints of the Gilbertian texts actually serve to sharpen Sullivan’s music rather than to tether it?’ (Jacobs, 1984: 243), concludes that ‘the latter must be the verdict of posterity, confirmed indeed by the later experience of *Ivanhoe*.’ He goes on to say that, ‘No work more cruelly illustrates the posthumous decline in Sullivan’s reputation as a “serious” composer.’ However, this decline was not entirely a natural phenomenon. As Young remarks in the opening of his final chapter of his book on Sullivan, ‘The death of Sullivan afforded his enemies earlier opportunity for denigration than might have been anticipated’ (Young, 1971: 263).

Among those who felt themselves to be a part of a resurgence in English musical art, there seems to have been almost an unspoken gentlemen’s agreement that Sullivan’s commercial success, his populism and his failure to engage with the earnest aspirations of his younger contemporaries effectively disqualified him from those who may be regarded as being of the first rank, so far as his colleagues were concerned. Walker’s and Fuller-Maitland’s comments have already been quoted and in his book, Dunhill relates that, when a student in the late 1880s, it was not considered decent to mention Sullivan’s name within the precincts of the Royal College of Music. The gradual decline in the popularity of the *The Golden Legend* in the years after the First World War appeared to confirm the negative estimates of Sullivan’s worth as a composer of serious music and permitted a

later generation of critics, such as Frank Howes and Peter Pirie, to confirm them in their writings. However, as has already been mentioned, recent developments in studies of the Victorian era and its art have benefited Sullivan by encouraging a reappraisal of works long thought to be worthless. Thus, in the year of the centenary of Sullivan's death, the Hyperion Record Company released the first commercial professional recording of *The Golden Legend*.

CONCLUSION

Having examined in detail much of Sullivan's output in most of the genres in which he wrote, and discussed them at considerable length, it is now appropriate to try to formulate some conclusions. One factor that has become evident is that, in his approach to the matter of musical style, Sullivan is all but unique. Few composers have written using such a wide range of stylistic gestures, even if the allusiveness of the comic operas is, for the moment, set aside. As a largely separate issue, it is also the case that there is little common ground in musical style between his early orchestral works, the choral works written at about the same time and the songs and ballads. Although it has been shown that the two genres of comic opera and large-scale choral work began to move closer together in the composition of *The Golden Legend* and the two comic operas that followed it, *Ruddigore* and *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

The operas demonstrate both Sullivan's ingenuity as a composer, but also his wit combined with a detailed knowledge of the repertory that allowed him to appropriate the right style for humorous effect, to give added point to Gilbert's words or to heighten the atmosphere of the *mise en scène*. At this point it would be appropriate to recapitulate the research questions which have informed this study; they were as follows:

- To what extent has criticism of Sullivan's comic operas been impeded by the failure of many writers to recognise when Sullivan was deliberately making use of different styles for particular purposes?

There seems little doubt that proper appreciation and intelligent criticism of the comic operas has been frustrated by a failure to recognise when Sullivan was making use of parody or allusion and this is true of both the commentators who were enthusiastic about the music and those who were not. The earliest stage works look to Italian models, such as the ensemble in *Trial by Jury* (1875) which draws upon the examples of both Bellini and Donizetti. It has already been noted that Gilbert began his career by writing burlesques of Italian operas and thus, in details such as his use of recitative, tended to adhere to Italian models. Sullivan was initially content to do the same, but later both showed much greater versatility in their approach to such matters.

The work of the partnership progressed in smoothness of technique and sophistication and this included a greater subtlety in Sullivan's musical references. As discussed earlier, *Iolanthe* draws on Mendelssohn's music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Verdi's for *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Rossini's in *Le Comte Ory* in *Princess Ida*. The experience of writing *The Golden Legend* enabled Sullivan to draw upon the examples of Liszt and Berlioz within comic opera in *Ruddigore* and *The Gondoliers* respectively, while his admiration for Wagner is expressed in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, with *Die Meistersinger* being the work he would be likely to have in mind.

The later operas see Sullivan expand his musical language further, with an adoption of a modified form of *leitmotif* in both *The Golden Legend* and *Ivanhoe* and later to be found in *The Beauty Stone* and *The Rose of Persia* at the end of his career. In *The Chieftain* (1895) he shows an awareness of Messager with a bilingual duet in the French operetta manner. The actual borrowings are often brief and sometimes eschew direct quotation, since Sullivan avoids drawing attention to them, ensuring that they are entirely integrated into the musical structure. His success was such that many have gone unnoticed and unremarked and often only reveal themselves when Sullivan's model comes to light.

- What is the relationship between Sullivan's music for the theatre and the rest of his output?

The relationship between the comic operas and the rest of Sullivan's output is more problematic; Sullivan's approach to the task of composition seems to have been identical regardless of the genre, excepting the stylistic references to be found in the comic operas written with Gilbert and the very particular style he adopted when writing for the ballet, but virtually nowhere else. When a work such as *The Yeomen of the Guard* (1888) follows one like *The Golden Legend* (1886) quite closely and because both the story and atmosphere have a certain amount in common, stylistic similarities in the music become apparent. This can also be observed when comparing the incidental music to *The Merchant of Venice* with *H M S Pinafore* where the works were also chronologically close and dealt with the sea as a theme within the narrative. In addition, the attempt to construct a typology for Sullivan's music reveals a similarity in his approach given certain dramatic features or situations.

- How did Sullivan relate to the nineteenth-century market for cultural goods?
- How did Sullivan's use of musical style relate to the audience's expectation of various musical genres?

At the outset of his career Sullivan decided to make his living as a composer as far as possible, which meant engaging with the current market. The fact that he succeeded in his attempt should not be overlooked, but it meant that certain compromises were unavoidable, although others were not. The adverse criticism levelled at his songs and ballads overlooks the fact that the entire German *lieder* tradition, to which many of his efforts in this field were indebted, is rooted in the expression of sentiment, if not sentimentality and Sullivan's best songs (outside the operas) are excellent examples of the genre. If the standard appears to be uneven, this is not surprising given the type of song which, at the time, was most likely to be successful (and therefore financially profitable). In this area more, perhaps, than any other, Sullivan's use of musical style stood in a direct relationship to an audience's expectations.

- To what extent is Sullivan's success in comic opera attributable to the fact that it is a genre that at the time was not a stereotype?

While it may be argued that Sullivan's success in comic opera was in part due to it being a genre that was not stereotypical, this would be to ignore the connections between comic opera as written and composed by Gilbert and Sullivan and those forms of entertainment which preceded it, such as the burlesque, the extravaganza and specifically, the ballad opera. These all contributed to what became comic opera and later musical comedy and the American musical. For audiences, the combination of recognisable elements from the older types of entertainment with a novel approach and contemporary allusions, both verbal and musical, was irresistible.

Much Victorian art, as has already been discussed, trod a narrow path between the banal and the sublime and commerce was never very far away. Sullivan's older contemporary, Charles Dickens had, like Sullivan, grown up in very deprived circumstances and when working first as a journalist and then as a novelist, what he wrote had to sell. The inherent commercialism in Dickens' art never attracted the condemnation that the mere suggestion of the same regarding Sullivan's music provoked in ill-disposed critics. The sentiment in Dickens' treatment of death, particularly the death of a child such as Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* or Smike in *Nicholas Nickleby* are the literary counterparts of choruses in *The Golden Legend* such as 'O Gladsome Light' and 'O Pure in Heart', as well as many other examples by less talented practitioners. Whatever faults the work may have, it is an authentic work of art of the mid-Victorian era with the same strengths and weaknesses observable in other examples found in the visual and literary arts of the period.

In writings about Sullivan, a recurring theme is the idea that Sullivan was somehow out of his time; 'Was not Sullivan a jewel in the wrong setting?' (Vaughan Williams, 1987: 3). 'He could, under happier circumstances, have written another *Figaro*' (Vaughan Williams, 1987: 168). 'The most direct way to the understanding of Sullivan's position is to think of him as belonging in spirit to the age of Haydn' (Eden, 1986: 162). Donald Tovey compared Haydn's and Beethoven's writing for the bassoon with that of Sullivan (Tovey, Vol. 1 1935: 66, Vol. 5: 133-4). There is a certain amount of force in this idea; as a personality, his natural mode of working was as a collaborator, not as a solitary genius such as Beethoven or Wagner. He was not overly concerned with forging a distinctive musical persona, as his plurality in such matters makes clear and while his humour and wit may recall Haydn, his attitude to stylistic matters has more in common with a figure such as Handel.

In his influential book, *Music in the Baroque Era*, Manfred Bukofzer makes a telling comparison between Bach and Handel and their differing approaches to musical style:

Handel assimilated the various national styles so that they became his second nature. He thus arrived at a complete coordination of national styles enabling him to master each one

equally well. Bach, conversely, assimilated the various influences with his own personal style and thus arrived at a fusion of national styles in which the single elements are inseparable. The two methods are incommensurable and cannot be weighed against each other... (Bukofzer, 1975: 349)

The relevance to Sullivan in this connection is that he could reasonably be said to have adopted Handel's view of stylistic matters. This allowed him to 'put on' a particular style if the circumstances seemed to demand it and there are numerous examples of Handel doing the same. The fact that both composers wrote a great deal for the stage and in oratorio is also not without significance. A contemporary of Sullivan who might be said to have more in common with Bach's approach would be Elgar, in whose output there is an unusual degree of uniformity of musical style irrespective of the genre in which he was writing.

To Sullivan and his collaborators must go the credit for creating and developing a new musical genre, but it was due to Sullivan alone that some of the best examples of serious musical art of which the age was capable came into being.

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Bibliographical Note on Editions of Sullivan's Music

As this thesis relies very largely on quotations from the published scores of Sullivan's works, it is appropriate to provide some information on their availability.

The operas in the series written and composed by Gilbert and Sullivan, from *Trial by Jury* in 1875 to *The Grand Duke* in 1896 and in due course, the earlier *Cox and Box* (1866) written by Sullivan with F. C. Burnand, that came to be included in the canon, were all published eventually in vocal scores by Chappell of Bond Street, London. Publishers such as Metzler had produced the first edition of some of the earlier productions. Other editions of the vocal scores are available from the publishers Schirmer and Kalmus, both American companies. For many years these were the only available source for Sullivan's music, but more recently, the full scores of at least some of the operas have been published. Eulenberg produced a miniature full score of *The Gondoliers* in 1986. Oxford University Press have published a new full score of *The Yeomen of the Guard*, edited by Colin Jagger (2016) and in 2000, the vocal score of *Ruddigore* edited by David Russell Hulme.

The American publishers Broude Brothers have embarked on the production of a new critical edition of the operas, which include the full score, vocal score and orchestral material, with very full scholarly introductions and critical apparatus. So far only two works have been completed and are available for purchase; these are *Trial by Jury*, edited by Steven Ledbetter (1994) and *H M S Pinafore*, edited by Percy M. Young (2012). Other titles advertised as being in preparation are *Patience*, edited by Percy M. Young, David Mackie and Marc Shepherd, *Iolanthe*, edited by Gerald Hendrie, *The Sorcerer* edited by Helga J. Perry, *Princess Ida*, edited by Richard Sherr and Marc Shepherd and *The Mikado* edited by Ronald Broude.

The full scores of *H M S Pinafore* (2001) and *The Pirates of Penzance* (2002) are available from Dover Publications, edited by Carl Simpson and Ephraim Hammett Jones. The performing materials for *The Golden Legend* are available for rental from the St David's Players, Cullompton, Exeter, Devon. The edition is the original one published by Novello and the popularity of the work until the Second World War has ensured that copies of the vocal score are readily available for purchase second hand. The Overture *di Ballo* was published by Novello in 1889, but a new edition of the full score is available from the independent publisher R. Clyde. The Symphony in E had been published by Novello in 1915 and the performing materials can still be hired from Chester Novello. However, a study score was produced in 2006 by a German publisher, mph München.

Small publishing concerns such as R. Clyde mentioned above, are making available full scores of Sullivan's less well-known works. These also include *The Amber Ring* and *Ray Walker*, who has issued

facsimile editions of works such as *On Shore and Sea* and the music for Tennyson's *The Foresters*. These tend to be marketed online and much material is also available to download from various websites such as the Petrucci Library, otherwise known as the International Music Score Library Project.

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